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UNIVERSALISM

ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED:

BEING A SYSTEM OF

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL DIVINITY,

DEDUCED FROM

REASON AND REVELATION.

BY OTIS A. SKINNER,

PASTOR OF THE FIFTH UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN BOSTON.

BOSTON:
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PREFACE.

During the winter and spring of 1839, I delivered to my society, in a series of discourses, the substance of the following pages. At the close of the series, a vote was passed, requesting a copy for publication. Feeling that a book, embodying the leading doctrinal and practical views of our religion, was greatly needed, I concluded to comply with the request, though fully sensible that the task of preparing such a work could be much better performed by another than by myself. In what I have advanced, I lay no claims to great research. Had I been fully qualified for such a labor, the nature and object of the work would have forbidden it. They also forbid all effort after new views. The task I undertook, was not to invent a system, but to illustrate and defend that held by Universalists. I have, therefore, freely availed myself of whatever was calculated to throw light upon the subject I was discussing. Where language has been quoted, due credit, I have intended, should be given.

It will be proper, also, that I should say, the work has been prepared for the people; those who wish to understand our religion, and be guided in the performance of its duties. Hence I have sought to express myself in a plain and intelligible manner, being anxious to be understood, rather than to please the critical and fastidious, with a labored and studied style. My aim has been simply to present the gospel in its true light, that the reader may see its worth, feel its power, and imbibe its spirit; and if I have succeeded in this, my object has been gained. I trust that the work will do good; that it will promote among Universalists a knowledge of their religion, and lead them to a more faithful discharge of their duties; that it will tend to diminish the prejudice existing against them; be instrumental in bringing many to embrace their views, and in converting sinners to God.

O. A. S.

Boston, Sept. 1839.

ERRATUM. Page 50, 4th line from bottom, for *flows*, read '*of laws*.'

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UNIVERSALISM ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

THE evidence, for the divine authority of the Bible, has been divided into *external*, *internal*, and *collateral*. The external consists of miracles and prophecy; the internal of the doctrines taught, their agreement with the divine character, and their tendency to promote the virtue and happiness of man; the collateral 'arises from a variety of circumstances, which less directly than the former prove the revelation to be of divine authority, but are yet supposed to be of great weight in the argument.' On these different points I wish to offer a few considerations.

I. Moses, the Prophets, the Savior and the Apostles professed to be teachers sent from God, to proclaim his will and truth. To convince the world that their claims were just, they wrought miracles, and foretold future events.* It was not

* It cannot be said here, that this reasoning would prove the magicians sent of God, for they wrought miracles; because their pretended miracles are essentially different from those of the Bible. It is true the doctrine has been advanced, that the 'evidence of the miracles alone will not sustain the test of a searching examination; for in themselves considered, they afford us no criterion to decide between the miracles of Christ

enough to appeal to the excellency, tendency and harmony of their doctrines; something more direct and explicit was necessary to show their divine authority, and that what they taught should be received as an infallible guide. They were, therefore, supernaturally endowed with power to work miracles, and reveal with positive certainty the unexplored future. These, no man, however great his intellectual or moral attainments, unaided by Heaven, could possibly do. External evidence then, is indispensable to establish the divine authority of the Bible. This we have said consists of miracles and prophecy.

1. Did the professed teachers from God work miracles? To be fully satisfied of this, we have only to observe, that they were matters of which the people could judge, as well as you can judge of what you taste, touch or hear. It is the work of the senses to decide when a man is raised from the dead; when four or five thousand are fed by a pittance; when the raging sea is stilled, as much as any work whatever. And it would be as reasonable to say, that anything which different persons see together, and see repeatedly and distinctly, is a matter of which they cannot judge, as to say the miracles were.*

and the miracles of a pretender.' See G. Ripley's article in the Christian Examiner, Nov. 1836, p. 253. But we would ask, When did a pretender ever raise a man who had been dead four days; cure, by a word, diseases that had 'baffled every effort of art;' restore a withered arm; instantly give sight to one born blind; or create food to satisfy the wants of thousands? The truth is, the works of the magicians bear every mark of deception, while the miracles of the Bible bear every mark of being real. We have given on pages 10, 11, 12, four characteristics of miracles; but not one of these belongs to the wonders of pretenders.

* See Horne, vol. 1, chap. 4. Also Leslie's short and easy method with the Deist.

Again: Miracles were 'instantaneously and publicly performed. A miracle does not present the shades and gradations observable in nature. Nature proceeds, not by fits and starts; but is gradual and progressive in its operations; does not create but unfolds; nourishes and causes to sprout and grow; sets to work second causes, which act only by little and little, and do not produce their effects until the end of a certain period.' Now the miracles bear no mark of this operation of nature —they are the work of an instant. The word is spoken, and a river turns to blood; the plagues of fire, hail and darkness come upon the people; the sick of the palsy takes up his bed and walks; the dumb speak, and the dead are raised to life. These things were done in the midst of a crowd, and under circumstances which precluded the possibility of deception. Could I have the privilege of previous arrangement, and secret machinery, I might do many things which would astonish the multitude, and lead them to believe that I was supernaturally endowed. But in the miracles of the Bible there was no secrecy. There was nothing done in darkness. All was open, and exposed to the inspection and scrutiny of friends and foes; so that deception was impossible.

Again: The end for which miracles were performed, was worthy the Divine interposition. They were performed, not to astonish and catch applause; not to awaken an idle curiosity; but to carry forward the great plan of Divine Providence, and spread throughout the world a system of doctrines, laws and precepts which should not only be adapted to the wants of man, but clothed with an authority that should render it efficacious in the moral renovation of society, and enable it to destroy the four great moral evils of the world—

'atheism, scepticism, immorality and vice.' This is surely an end worthy of miraculous aid—'an end full of dignity, majesty and mercy.'

Again: The number and variety of miracles prove their reality. Did the Bible rest upon three or four miracles, we should think perhaps there might have been some deception practised. But since the number is almost innumerable, we cannot harbor for a moment the thought that the people were deceived. Were the different miracles merely a repetition of the same act, the proof would not be so conclusive. But instead of this, they are of every possible variety. In one, plagues are sent; in another, the Red Sea is divided; in another, manna falls from heaven; in another, inveterate diseases are cured; and in another, the chains of death are broken. Many other considerations might be offered to show that the miracles were real; that they were 'interruptions of the regular and established succession of events, taking place in connection with the mission of persons professing to be sent of God, and designed to give that proof of their mission.' If, therefore, they were real, do they not place the divine authority of the Bible beyond a doubt? Unless we admit this, we say God gave miraculous aid, to help man palm falschoods upon the world.

Besides—those who worked the miracles, appealed to them as the sign of their divine commission. Jesus says—'The works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.'* Peter says, 'Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among you, by signs and wonders which God did by him.'† When John was in prison, he sent to inquire whether Jesus was the

* John v. 36. † Acts ii. 22.

Christ, or they were to look for another; to which he replied: 'Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.'* It is certain, therefore, that Jesus appealed to his miracles as proof that he was a teacher from God, the Messiah predicted by the prophets.

Those who saw these works viewed them in this light. 'We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the works which thou doest except God be with him.†' When Jesus said—'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent,' they said, 'What sign showest thou, then, that we may see and believe? what dost thou work?'‡ When the Jews sought to persuade the man whose eyes Jesus had opened, not to give him the glory, saying, they knew not from whence he was, he replied: 'Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.'§

In the same light were miracles regarded by the prophets. They predicted that Jesus should work them, and give them as signs of his divine mission. They declared that he should open the eyes of the blind; unstop the ears of the deaf;

* Matt. xi. 4. 5. See also John xiv. 10. 11; x. 37. 38.; Heb. ii. 4. † John iii. 2.

‡ John vi. 29. 30. § John ix. 30—33. See also Acts iv. 16. 17; John xi. 47. 48; Matt. xi. 23; Luke vii. 11—18.

cause the lame to walk, and the dumb to sing.* Hence the people who saw his mighty works said—When Messias shall come, shall he do greater works than this man doeth?† We may say, therefore, with those who witnessed the miracles of Christ,—We know that the Bible is from God; for its authors could not have performed the works they did, if God had not been with them. We are to receive it then, as divine, as an infallible guide in all the concerns of faith and practice. Its doctrines and precepts would be equally as valuable without the miracles as with them, could we prove them of divine authority. 'They are like the massive subterranean arches and columns of a huge building. It is not on their account that we prize the building, but the building for its own sake. We do not think of the foundation, nor care about it, other than to know that it has one. We dwell above in the upper and fairer halls. The crowds go in and out, and rejoice in their comforts and splendors, without ever casting a thought on that upon which the whole so peacefully and securely reposes. Such are the miracles to the gospel. They support the edifice, and upon a divine foundation. They show us, that if the superstructure is fair and beautiful to dwell in; and if its towers and endless flights of steps *appear* to reach even up to heaven, it is all just what it seems to be; for it rests upon the broad foundation of the Rock of Ages.'‡

I have dwelt longer upon the miracles, and their inseperable connection with the evidences of christianity than I should have done, had not much been written of late, to show that miracles are not legitimate proof of the divine authority of the per-

* Isai. xxxv. † John vii. 31; iv. 29—30.
‡ Rev. Wm. Ware.

son who performs them; and that if they were, we have not sufficient evidence that the miracles recorded in the four gospels took place, to make them the ground of faith. The first of these propositions is in direct opposition to the Scriptures; for they declare that Christ was approved of God by signs and wonders; and that we ought to believe the Father sent him, because he performed miraculous works. In what other way could Jesus have demonstrated the divinity of his mission? 'Suppose a man to stand before you and to say, "I am the bearer of a special communication from God." What would you—what must you ask of him, as the credentials of his mission? His air might be noble, his doctrine excellent, his speech divine. His communication might thrill you with awe, or with rapture. Would that satisfy you? If you were an enthusiast, it might; but if you were a philosopher, I am sure it would not. He might tell you things which above all things you wished to know. He might tell you, as Swedenborg has professed to do, of the very state of the blest who have departed from you; and of your own future state,—how you were to live in that unknown world,—and you might wish to believe it. What could make you believe it? I can conceive of but one thing,—*a miracle.* If he came from an earthly monarch, you would demand his credentials,—the signet ring, or the sign manual. The chosen seal of the Almighty Monarch is *miracle!*'*

The second proposition sets aside the genuineness of the Four Gospels; and assumes that no positive reliance can be placed upon their statements; and that all who build their faith upon them, can have no certainty of its being founded in

* Rev. O. Dewey's Dudleian Lecture delivered before Harvard University, May 14th, 1836.

truth. This is surely a strange position; for if we deny the Four Gospels, how shall we prove the mission of Christ; his ministry in the earth; his spotless examples; his triumphant death and resurrection? We say nothing of the motives or sincerity of those who entertain these views; but we regard them as subversive of the whole christian system. True—those who hold them are eloquent in praise of christianity; but what is their christianity? 'Not a special revelation, an authoritative record of God's will;' but a something which accords with their feelings, and finds a hearty response from the divinity within. According to this idea, christian 'faith is just like faith in any good writings; that is, simply a belief that they are good and wise, and therefore, true; and if true, in accordance with the will of God. In this sense, we have faith in the dictates of reason.' But we deny that this is christian faith. The authors of the Bible profess to come from God with God's truth; and faith receives them as such. Therefore christianity 'must have some attestation beyond its general consonance with our moral nature; else every demonstration in the mathematics, and every undisputed principle in moral philosophy would be a revelation. That attestation, I say, is a miracle.'

2. The prophecies of the Bible prove its divine authority. The argument drawn from prophecy is one of the most conclusive and satisfactory that could be given in favor of the Scriptures. No man by mere human powers can look into futurity. The future belongs to God, and he only can disclose it. Those who understand the history of nations, and have been accustomed to trace the operation of cause and effect, may often calculate with considerable certainty about the future, and the results of any plan which is formed. But in

such cases they judge from the dependence which one event has upon another. Now in regard to the prophets we find none of this calculation. Foretelling events hundreds and hundreds of years distant, they could place no reliance on such calculations, and especially for the minute particulars which they revealed.

As an instance, take the prophecies respecting the destruction of Tyre.* These were made at a time when Tyre was exceedingly prosperous; 'when successful in commerce, and abounding in riches and glory.' They were of the most circumstantial character. 'They announced that the city was to be taken by the Chaldeans; (who were an inconsiderable people when the prophecy was delivered) that the inhabitants should flee over the Mediterranean into the adjacent isles and countries; and even there should not find a quiet settlement; that the city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and merchandize; that it should be taken and destroyed a second time; that the people should in time forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true worship and true religion of God; and finally, that the city should be totally destroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon.'† Now all these predictions had a literal fulfilment, so that we can learn the history of Tyre from prophecy, as well as history;‡ Indeed, the prophets may be called its historians. It is certain, therefore, that they were taught of God; for it is utterly impossible for human foresight to have predicted all these extremely minute particulars. Well,

* Isai. xxiii. ; Jer. xxv ; Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. xxviii ; Amos i. 9. 10 ; Zech. ix. 1—8.

† See Horne's Introduction, chap. iv. vol. 1 ; Bishop Newton's 11th Disser.

‡ Rollin's History, vol. 5, pp. 94—102.

these are only a sample of the predictions with which the Bible abounds.

The limits of a single chapter forbid the introduction of many cases; but I must lay before you some of the predictions which relate to the Messiah. Moses says—'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.'* This prediction the Jews applied to the Messiah; and when he came, the tribe of Judah just retained its political existence—it could barely be said to hold the sceptre. Soon after, it lost its political existence, and ceased to have any authority or magistrates of its own. Daniel† pointed out the time when Christ should come, so minutely, that the whole Jewish nation were expecting him when he made his appearance; and vast numbers of them were gathered together from all countries unto Jerusalem, looking for the Savior. In addition to this, the prophets foretold the place where he should be born, saying that out of Bethlehem of Judah he should come.‡ Indeed, we have in the prophets, a most minute history of the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus. Let me place a few predictions in contrast with the records of the New Testament.

They part my garments among them,	Then the soldiers when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also a coat: Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.—

* Gen. xlix. 10. † Daniel ix. 24—27. ‡ Micah v. 2.

and cast lots upon my vestments. Ps. xxii. 18.	They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. John xix. 23. 24.
They pierced my hands and my feet. Ps. xxii. 16.	Behold my hands and my feet. Luke xxiv. 39.
He was numbered with the transgressors. Isai. liii. 12.	Then were two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Matt. xxvii. 38.
They gave also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Ps. lxix. 21.	And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, they gave him vinegar with gall. Matt. xxvii. 33. 34.
He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. Ps. xxxiv. 20.	The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.
Neither shall ye break a bone thereof (of the Paschal Lamb.) Ex. xii. 46.	Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. John xix. 31. 34.*

Such is a specimen of the prophecies with which

* See Keith's Demonstration of the Truth of Christianity, chapter ix.

the Bible abounds. Therefore, it comes to us clothed with divine authority.

To this conclusion, but one objection will be urged; and that is, that the Four Gospels are not genuine; and, therefore, we do not know whether these prophecies were fulfilled, as here asserted, or not. I state this objection, because the genuineness of the Four Gospels has been more than doubted by some writers of the present day; but in reply to it I have room for only a word.

'The gospels are quoted, as the undoubted works of the authors to whom they are ascribed, by an unbroken series of christian writers reaching back to the end of the second century; or in other words, to the time of Irenæus, who wrote in the last quarter of that century.' The question, therefore, is, 'Have we any testimony to their genuineness beyond this time?' Justin Martyr, who wrote from the year 140 to 165, quotes largely from all the gospels, but that of St. Mark, 'which he has seldom quoted,' so that 'it must be plain to all that he owned them, and had the highest respect for them. He affords proof that these gospels were read in the assemblies of the christians every Lord's Day.'* Paley says, "that in all Justin's works, from which might be extracted a complete life of Christ, there are but two instances in which he refers to anything as said or done by Christ, which is not related concerning him in our present gospels; which shows that these gospels, and these we may say, alone, were the authorities from which the christians of that day drew the information upon which they depended."† 'We learn directly from his [Justin's] writings, that the gospels were received by those christians of his age, that is, by those christians who lived during

* A. Norton on the Gospels. † Paley, part I. ch. ix.

the first half of the second century, as the authentic and sacred records of the history of their Master, the works of his Apostles and their companions.'* He says—'The Apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called gospels, have thus delivered it, that Jesus commanded them to take bread and give thanks.'†

Leaving Justin, we go back to Papias, who flourished about the year 110, and who assures us that he was acquainted with many of the disciples of the Apostles. Papias says—'If I chanced to meet with any elder or presbyter, who had conversed with the Apostles, I diligently inquired of him the sayings of the Apostles, what Andrew, what Peter, what Philip, and the other Apostles and disciples of the Lord had taught. For I desired to have the benefit not only of their books, but of the words which others had heard them speak.'‡ Papias mentions Matthew and Mark by name. Besides, he lived with those who had seen St. John, the venerable survivor of the Apostles, and who had listened to instructions from his lips.‖ We are, therefore, perfectly satisfied that the Four Gospels are genuine,—and consequently they contain a faithful record of the wonderful fulfilment of the

* A. Norton, vol. I. p. 239.

† The following, among other passages, are quoted by Justin nearly verbatim, Matt. xxv. 41 ; Luke x. 19 ; Mark viii. 31 ; John i. 14 ; John iii. 3. 4 ; xiv. 24.

‡ See Euseb. Hist. Lib. III. c. 39.

‖ I have omitted to introduce the testimony of what are called Apostolical Fathers, because A. Norton, in his late work on the genuineness of the gospels, says, they are not to be relied on. He differs, however, from Lardner. Paley, Thayer and others, who have followed Lardner, have traced, by the testimony of these fathers, the Four Gospels up to the very days of the Apostles. We pretend not to decide which is correct ; we only say, no testimony is wanting, as the case is presented by Norton, to prove that the Four Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear, and that they contain a true history of our Savior's ministry.

divine predictions. Here then is an argument for the Scriptures which defies all opposition, and which must make every man of candor, stand in awe and reverence before them. They are God's word; for none but God could have enabled men to speak as their writers have spoken; none but God could have enabled them to perform the mighty works by which their labors were distinguished, works which, ages before, the prophets had predicted.*

II. The internal evidence of the Bible. This consists in its doctrines, their agreement with the divine character, and their tendency to promote the virtue and happiness of mankind.

1. If we look into the heathen world, we find the most degrading views have been entertained on the subject of religion. Heathens believed in gods of every grade and character, from the highest celestial down to the lowest infernal ones. They had gods of the sea, and gods of the field, and gods of the heavens. They had a god to preside over every separate department of nature, and over every relation of life. These gods being subject to anger and wrath, often required appeasing

* That christians during the latter part of 2d cent., had sufficient means of determining whether the gospels were genuine or not, may appear from the consideration that they must have been acquainted with the history of the promulgation of these books. If the gospels were the works of those to whom they are ascribed, they had been received as such by the contemporaries of the evangelists; by Apostles and the companions and disciples of Apostles. They had been handed down by them to succeeding christians as the authentic histories of their Master. There had been a clear, unbroken, and, therefore, incontrovertible acknowledgment of their genuineness during the period of somewhat more than a century, which had elapsed between the time when the earliest of them was written, and the time to which we have clearly traced back their general reception. A. Norton, Genuineness of the Gospels, vol. i. pp. 136, 137.

by costly sacrifices, painful sufferings, and the offering of human victims. Hence the worship of the heathen consisted in expensive and painful rites. When the gods were angry, recourse was had to self-inflicted torture and human sacrifices; when they were pleased, their altars were loaded with the most rich and splendid offerings.

Equally absurd were the views of the heathen respecting the origin of man. Some believed that he grew out of the mud, others that he sprang from the earth like a grasshopper, others that he was spewed from the mouth of a fish, and others that he came from the water. They had views just as unreasonable respecting the future world. Those who believed in an hereafter, thought its enjoyments would be sensual. But the philosophers generally denied or doubted a future existence; and believed that the soul ceased to exist at the death of the body; that beyond this life, there is neither care nor joy. Such, in a few words, were the religious sentiments of the heathen.

If we turn from these to the Bible, we find views the most enlightened, reasonable and consistent; and which will stand the test of reason, reflection and examination, which continue to increase in the estimation of man in proportion as they are understood, and their practical bearing is seen. Thus the Bible teaches, that there is one God; that the Godhead is not like gold and silver, graven by art and man's device. It teaches that spiritual sacrifices only are acceptable to God—that to love God and our neighbor, is the sum of human duty. It teaches also, that man is the offspring of God, that the Lord made of one blood all nations that dwell on all the face of the earth. And it teaches, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal and in the heavens; that the happiness of the

other world is spiritual, not sensual—that it consists in the exercise of the holiest faculties of our nature. Now we say of these sentiments, as the people said, when they listened with astonishment to the instructions of the Savior,—Whence have these men this wisdom? Why this infinite superiority over the whole heathen world? Why do reason, consistency and excellency characterize their instructions, while folly, absurdity, and superstition characterize those of the heathen?

The Bible has in all ages stood alone, a pure light in the world, a correct teacher among men. All other books, especially all in opposition to this, have been full of darkness and corrupting sentiments. The Bible has been in every age to the moral, what the sun has to the natural world —its light, its glory, its source of all true knowledge. It has not a single sentiment degrading to human nature, pernicious in its influence, or at war with reason and the instructions of the natural world. Every thing about it is noble, grand, inspiring and hallowing—it must, therefore, be God's book.

2. Another proof that the Bible is from God is its design. When I lay down this proposition, I do not forget the common charge of infidels, that the Bible is the work of priestcraft, designed to empower a few with authority, that they may live in luxury and ease. But I blush for the man who can make a charge so false and groundless. He who asserts this, is either ignorant of the Bible, or determined to belie it. From the days of Moses down to the very last of the Apostles, not a single inspired servant of God has merited the charge of laboring for his own, to the exclusion of the people's good. Moses gave up the honors, riches and pleasures of Egypt, and the court of Pharaoh, and linked himself and his fortune with a nation

of slaves. The order of priests which he created, had but poor provision made for their welfare, and were cut off from all the means of wealth and grandeur. The prophets have all been humble and persecuted men, who have given their time and talents to the good of the world. Jesus was poor, persecuted and despised. 'The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.' His apostles were illiterate fishermen of Galilee, an humble and hated band, who journeyed without scrip or purse from country to country, to proclaim the gospel of salvation. And yet, we are told, the Bible is the work of men, who have sought power, ease, wealth and honor. How supremely absurd! Look at its instructions. These have been thus summed up by one of its inspired writers. 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.'* Again, it is said, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly?'† The Savior sums up all the instructions of the Bible in these words: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets.'‡ Thus we see, every inspired writer has set self aside—has forgotten his own wants, his own interests, his own ease, his own honor, and labored for the good of the world, labored for man's redemption from evil, and his elevation in knowledge, virtue and happiness.

This is true of no other religion. Every other

* Eccle. xii. 13. † Micah vi. 8. ‡ Matt. xxii. 37—40.

has sought the elevation of a few rather than the good of all. The Hindoos teach, that kings have a divine origin, separate from the rest of mankind; that they are formed of particles drawn from the substance of the gods, and consequently surpass all mortals in glory.* Thus their religion feeds the pride of kings, and encourages them to oppress their subjects, and disturb the peace of their neighbors. Similar views are entertained respecting the priests. They teach that they have a peculiar degree of sanctity, and should be specially reverenced on that account; that they have a superior origin to all others; and that even a king, unless he wishes for immediate destruction, must not provoke them. It is said, they must be invariably honored, for they are something transcendently divine. Such is the kingcraft and priestcraft of Hindooism. Nor is this all. This system has no connection with moral virtue. To produce this makes no part of its object. So far from this, it is friendly to vice; many of its gods and goddesses are personifications of vice, or persons distinguished for their wickedness. Many of its rites are impiously licentious, and many of its temples are devoted to the foulest of practices. How different is christianity. This is a system designed solely for the promotion of moral virtue and the public good; and its founder, its prophets and apostles labored, not for their own welfare, but for the welfare of the world. Their aim, and their only aim, was to make men holy, to make them do by others as they would that others should do by them.

Thus, we see in the Bible nothing human, nothing of man's selfishness or passions, nothing to feed his pride or gratify his lusts. It bears the impress of divinity on every page; for none but a

* See Priestley's Institutes.

holy God could have been the author of a book, whose whole design is the suppression of vice, and the upbuilding of virtue.

III. We come now to consider the collateral evidence in favor of the Scriptures. Here a very wide field is opened before me; but I must confine my remarks to the early propagation of christianity, and to the beneficial effect which it has produced in every age of the world. Would time permit, I might point out the agreement between the doctrines of the Old and New Testaments; the harmony of the system they reveal; its accordance with the divine will and character; its adaptation to the situation of the world; its excellency and wisdom, and the concessions which its greatest enemies have made; but my limits forbid, and I must be content with presenting the two points which I have named.

1. Its early propagation. To see the full force of the argument in favor of the gospel from the rapidity of its early progress, we ought to consider the difficulties it had to encounter; the means it had of surmounting those difficulties; the nature of the change it produced; and the success which attended it. Our limits, however, will only allow us to say, first, that almost every obstruction was thrown in its way which could be conceived of. The Jewish religion, with its promised temporal Messiah, opposed it in the most bitter manner. So did the heathen religion, with its thirty thousand gods, its obscene rites, its degrading influences. Government, being in the hands of its enemies, did all that could be done, by cruel enactments, by the aid of dungeons, prisons and death to prevent its progress. The colleges and seminaries of learning also, used all their influence against it. Second—The only human means of overcoming this opposition, and effecting an entire change,

was the preaching of a few unlettered fishermen. Third—The change produced was not with regard to a mere philosophical opinion, but with regard to an entirely new religious system,—a system embracing a chain of events the most miraculous, and doctrines entirely different from any then known;—a system which could spread, only as heathenism, with its countless gods, its licentious feasts, its profane mysteries, its idol temples, was trampled in the dust. This new system was not one which lived in the haunts of vice; which rode on the whirlwind of passion, which wàs the companion of despotism, which grew and flourished and gained strength, without renovating the heart and elevating the affections; but it was a system, which rose to the throne by breathing its benign spirit into the government, by abolishing laws which justified murder, by putting an end to all gladiatorial shows, by restraining the madness of the people, by protecting the endearments of home, and by rendering community holy. So thorough and great was this change, both in doctrine and practice, that a new order of worship was set up, and churches were every where established in the name of Christ; that all idol feasts were abolished, and one great feast, in commemoration of Jesus, was universally observed;—that the old day of worship was neglected, and a new day set apart, in honor of the Savior's resurrection. Fourth—This change was not only entire in the doctrine, practice and government; but rapid beyond all precedent. Mighty and extensive as it was, the whole was done in the brief space of about 270 years. Here all human calculation is baffled; we see nothing like usual revolutions, where one pushes forward another, as wave pushes forward wave upon the ocean; we are even unable to link together the rapidly occurring events. Society, government, religion and art are all changed as in a moment;

and human nature is lifted, as by magic, from its degradation. Nothing remains stationary but mountains, seas and rivers, those 'unchanging features of nature.'

Here I pause, and call upon the infidel to show the reason of all this. He denies the resurrection of Jesus; he denies the miraculous powers of the Apostles; but in doing this, he is forced to admit, what is infinitely more miraculous, that the grandest effect ever produced, was without a cause. He cannot say, the Apostles practised an imposition; for they commenced their preaching on the very spot where Jesus performed his miracles, and was raised from the dead. In Jerusalem the first churches were established, and three thousand converts made in a day. The Apostles brought no story from a distance about miracles, and the resurrection of their Lord. They began among the very people where these things occurred. They appealed to them, for the truth of what they asserted; and this no impostor ever did. No one witnessed the miracles of Mohammed—they were performed in secret. No one has seen the golden bible of the Mormons, except those who have fabricated the story; but of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus enemies and friends were witnesses. So of the miracles of the Apostles. The people knew when they saw the blind and the sick healed; they knew when they saw and heard illiterate men speak with cloven tongues. In these cases, there was no chance for deception; and they were constrained to admit that God was with them. Hence it is said, 'And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, * * and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes, both of men and women.' What then can the infidel do? What ground can he take? That the Apostles did carry

on a work, which effected an entire revolution in the government, religion and morals of the world, is certain; and that this was done by preaching Jesus and the resurrection, and by performing works that were thought miraculous, is also certain. These are undisputed facts.

Let me state a case which will give you a more distinct idea of this argument. Suppose a man to rise up in Boston, as a teacher of heathenism, and profess to give sight to the blind, feet to the lame, and life to the dead. He collects around him twelve men, whom at his death, he commissions to preach his doctrine. These men commence their labors by preaching the resurrection of their master; they assert that he was not only seen after his resurrection by them, but by above five hundred at once, who are still living. Suppose also, that these twelve men claim to raise the dead, and perform many other miracles; and to do this, not in secret, but before the multitude. And suppose, they seek through this story about the resurrection of their master, and through the aid of their own miracles, the propagation of heathenism, how would they succeed? How much would they do towards overthrowing our government, destroying our religion, and changing the aspect of society? All know that under these circumstances they would not gain a single convert; because the people could test at once the reality of their pretensions, and prove on the spot, the falsity of their story. Now this is the very ground on which the gospel spread. It was rested entirely on the resurrection of Jesus, and the miraculous powers of the Apostles. And these were facts about which there could be no mistake, and on which the people could decide with the same certainty, that you can decide on holding this book. It was this very circumstance, that gave such almighty energy to the labors of

the Apostles, that carried irresistible conviction to the hearts of thousands in a day, that caused the gospel to go on in opposition to all the powers arrayed against it. Had not the basis of christianity been of this supernatural character; had it not been a fact then recent, and miracles daily performed in the presence of assembled multitudes; had it been simply urged as a system consistent with itself and worthy the confidence of mankind, and been rested on the ground of reason and philosophy; had it been advocated as infidelity was in France, and tricked out in all the tinsel ornament of mock-science, or as infidelity was sought to be established in our own land, by a horde of lecturers on literature, science and government, led on by a female atheist misnamed Wright, the case would be entirely different; though even then, there is no way of accounting for the results produced, without attributing miraculous powers to the Apostles.

The Apostles converted thousands of Jews in a day; and yet how rare a thing it is now to gain a Jewish convert; the Apostles converted multitudes of heathens wherever they went, and yet how few have been converted by all the efforts of modern missionaries. Now why this difference, if it be not in the fact of the supernatural powers of the Apostles, and the witnesses they were able to bring to substantiate the resurrection of Christ. Why this almighty energy of the gospel in the hands of the Apostles—an energy which lifts up the world from the lowest possible state of depravity to one of virtue and holiness, and which triumphs over the blinded prejudices of the multitude, the arbitrary power of the magistrate, the unlimited influence of idolatry, and the most headstrong, malignant, obstinate and universal spirit of hatred, that ever pervaded the world? There is no way of account-

ing for this energy, but by admitting the resurrection of Jesus, and the supernatural powers of the Apostles.

2. If we look at its effects, we shall see the correctness of our conclusions. 'Although,' says the elegant Porteus, 'christianity has not always been so well understood, or so honestly practised, as it ought to have been; although its spirit has been often mistaken and its precepts misapplied, yet, under all these disadvantages, it has gradually produced a visible change in those points which most materially concern the peace and quiet of the world. Its beneficent spirit has spread itself abroad in the world, through all the different relations and modifications of life; and communicated its kindly influence to almost every public and private concern of mankind. It has insensibly worked itself into the inmost frame and constitution of civil states. It has given a tinge to the complexion of their governments, to the temper and administration of their laws. It has restrained the spirit of the prince, and the madness of the people. It has softened the rigor of despotism, and tamed the insolence of conquest. It has in some degree taken away the edge of the sword, and thrown, even over the horrors of war, a veil of mercy. It has descended into families, diminished the pressure of private tyranny, improved every domestic endearment, given tenderness to the parent, humanity to the master, respect to superiors, to inferiors ease; so that mankind are under infinite obligations to the mild and pacific temper of the Bible, and have reaped from it more substantial benefits than all things else. As one proof of this, among many others, consider only the shocking carnage made in the human species, by the exposure of infants, the gladiatorial shows, which sometimes cost Europe, twenty or thirty

thousand lives in a month; and the exceedingly cruel usage of slaves, allowed and practised by the ancient Pagans. These were not the accidental and temporary excesses of sudden fury ; but were legal, and established, and constant methods of murdering mankind. Had christianity done nothing more than bring into disuse, as it confessedly has done, the two former of these customs, entirely, and the latter to a very great degree, it had justly merited the title of the *benevolent religion.*'

Space will not allow me to pursue further the proof of the divine authority of the Bible. What I have said, is only a sample of what may be offered in defence of this holy book. Allow me to conclude in the beautiful and summary language of Philips. Speaking of infidels, he says—'In spite of all the scoff and menacing, I say, of the sacred volume, they would obliterate, it is a book of facts, as well authenticated as any heathen history—a book of miracles, incontestably avouched—a book of prophecy, confirmed by past as well as present fulfilment—a book of poetry, pure and natural, and elevated even to inspiration—a book of morals such as human wisdom never framed for the perfection of human happiness. I will abide by the precepts, admire the beauty, revere the mysteries, and as far as in me lies, practise the mandates of this sacred volume.'

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF DIVINITY.

Having proved the divine authority of the Bible, I will now proceed to show that it is a complete system of divinity. By this I mean, that it makes known God's character, his purpose in the creation of man, the means employed for the accomplishment of that purpose, its final result, and all the duties arising from the privileges and relations of man, together with the consequences of neglecting those duties. As the Bible was written by different persons, and at different times, we shall not expect to find it inculcating a system of doctrine in the orderly manner of a book written by one person, in illustration and defence of christianity. It does not contain such a system of moral and religious duty. We have not first, a chapter on our duty to God; second, to our neighbor; third, to our children. We find the lessons of duty interspersed through the inspired writings; and by bringing them together, we make out a perfect system. It is the same in relation to doctrine. 'It presents us with a copious fund of evangelical truth, which, though it has not the form of a regular system, yet its parts are such, that, when united, they make the most complete body of doctrine that we can possibly have.'

There is a particular necessity for the labor which we have undertaken. We have among us a class of christians, somewhat numerous, whose views on the result of God's government are un-

known; or perhaps I should say, who have no belief with regard to it. They are constantly sending forth publications, many of which are expressly designed to explain their faith, and yet they are silent on the final destiny of the world. Those who attend the most faithfully upon the ministry of these christians, are wholly unable to tell the views of their ministers on the future condition of those who die in sin, which shows, that on this subject, a guarded silence is preserved.* Before entering upon the main arguments against this theory, I wish to suggest a few queries, which will serve to prepare the reader's mind for what I have to offer. First. Does it not come to us under somewhat suspicious circumstances? Christians of all countries, from

* Rev. A. Bigelow, of Taunton, in his sermon on Unitarianism, speaks of a 'future retribution,' but leaves the reader in the dark about its results. See Liberal Preacher, vol. 3. Rev. O. Dewey, of N. Y. in his tract, explaining the belief of Unitarians, speaks of future punishment, its greatness and intensity; but is silent on its duration. Dr. J. Kendall, of Plymouth, in his sermon on Future Retribution, states three systems of a future retribution, but does not tell which he adopts. See Liberal Preacher, vol. 1. The late Rev. B. Whitman of Waltham, is said to have hoped in the salvation of all, 'though he did not consider himself commissioned, as an *ambassador of Christ*, to proclaim this doctrine, while at the same time, he felt, that, as a christian *philosopher*, he might be permitted to indulge the hope, that it would prove true.' See Memoir of B. Whitman, p. 174. We are familiar with the writings of Dr. Channing; but do not know his views on the result of God's government. Rev. G. W. Burnap of Baltimore, has a 'course of lectures on the doctrines of christianity, in controversy between Unitarians and other denominations of christians;' but he does not touch the question, whether all will be saved. Dr. Lowell, of this city, in a sermon at the ordination of Rev. John L. Sibley, says, 'I know you will be told, that you must indoctrinate your people with your own theological system, *if you unfortunately have any*, in self-defence. This language is unbecoming christians.'

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the days of the Apostles down to the present, have been almost unanimous in the belief, that the Bible does reveal a system of doctrine. Now if this be wrong, why was it unknown to the primitive christians? Why did not they obtain some glimpse of it from the inspired Apostles? Were we unable to find Universalism among the primitive christians, it would be a strong proof against it. Second. Why should God have withheld a revelation of the result of his purpose? It could not be from a want of knowledge, 'for known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world;'* 'all things are naked and opened before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.'† It could not be to give efficacy to his laws; for a righteous being could not seek to enforce his laws by imaginary considerations. Third. How could we judge of the equity and righteousness of God's plan, unless it were fully revealed? How could we form an opinion of a new theory about the earth, before its different parts were laid before us? How could we form any estimate of the value of a government without understanding both its laws and penalties? If not, how can we give our assent to God's government, without a knowledge of its termination?

With these queries in mind, let us proceed to examine our subject.

1. The Bible must be a complete body of divinity, for it is a revelation of the will, purpose and plan of God. 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth,

* Acts xv. 18. † Heb. iv. 13.

even in him,'* 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'† 'For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'‡ These quotations are sufficient to prove, that the Bible reveals an entire system of doctrine; that it exhibits that perfect plan which exists in the divine mind. The system of human duty was all fixed with God, before the advent of his inspired teachers, so that what they declared was only a transcript from his mind. It is the same with regard to his government. Every thing in this was ordered and established. This we must say, otherwise there could be no harmony between the rules of duty, and the principles of this government. Besides, no intelligent being can act without a design, and a plan for the accomplishment of that design. The perfection of the plan will always correspond to the wisdom of him who forms it. Therefore, as God's wisdom is infinite, his plan is perfect. But what is a perfect plan? Is it not one, where the end is secured by appropriate means? Could we say God's plan is perfect, if he be not sure of accomplishing his design? To declare, therefore, all the counsel of God, is to reveal the extent, character and result of his government, so that we shall have a distinct knowledge of its principles, and be able to judge of its equity.

Those who hold the theory in question, entertain the most cheering views of God and the purposes he has formed; they say 'he has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the peni-

* Eph. i. 9. 10. † Rev. iv. 11. ‡ Acts xx. 27.

tent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible.'* Now the only conclusion which can be drawn from such sentiments is, that the father will cause his government to end in the perfect happiness of all. The writer from whom we have quoted, has said, 'that it is very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of him meanly; to apply to his person high sounding epithets, and to his government principles which make him odious. The heathens called Jupiter the greatest and the best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real ideas of God, by their general language, for in all ages, they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his disposition towards his creatures.' This is a great truth; but how can we judge of God's purposes and the principles of his administration, unless we know their result? It is not enough, therefore, to say, God has a good design, God has a benevolent disposition; we must show that this design will be executed, and this disposition always manifested, or we shall not know but what like Jupiter, who was called the greatest and best, his dealings may be black with cruelty and injustice. Consequently, we can know nothing of God's real character, unless we know the termination of his government. Hence the Bible must be a complete body of divinity.

2. The Bible is God's statute book, which contains his laws, and their penalties. Take this away, and we have no means of knowing our duty, or the consequences of sin. It occupies the same place in the divine government, that a statute book does in the government of a state.

* Dr. Channing.

Therefore, it must contain an entire system—the law and its penalty. If, for instance, this state should withhold its laws from the people, keep them locked up in its archives, they would not be binding upon one of its inhabitants; or if it should publish its laws, but withhold their penalties, they could not in justice be inflicted; for no government can enforce a penalty, which it has never published.

These cases show in the most positive manner, just how far the Bible must go. It must reveal every law to which God holds his people accountable; and the penalty attached to every law. If, therefore, it does not contain the penalty of endless suffering, it can never in righteousness be inflicted upon any, however hardened and cruel they may be. Hence all who say, it is impossible to decide whether the penalty of the law is endless misery, annihilation, or only a limited punishment, cannot in reason say, that any thing more will be inflicted, than is distinctly revealed. Thus the position they take, brings them upon the ground, that all punishment is limited, or else compels them to accuse God of injustice.

3. The points of controversy between the inspired teachers and their opposers, show that the Bible must reveal a system of doctrine. If we look into the history of the church, during the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles, we find that some of their enemies advocated the annihilation of man, and some the doctrine of endless misery. Now it is natural to expect something would be said in refutation of these, if they were false; for we cannot believe that they would allow errors of such magnitude to pass uncondemned; and especially when they claimed to be the lights of the world both in faith and practice. The Scriptures

justify this; for they give the way in which these doctrines were treated.

The Sadducees, who denied a future existence, who said there was neither future life, nor angel, nor spirit, came to Jesus with a difficulty existing in their minds against the doctrine of a resurrection. Supposing that he taught the same kind of a resurrection, which the Pharisees did, they came to him with the case of a woman, who had had seven husbands, but no children by either. As the Pharisees taught that in the resurrection, we should marry and be given in marriage, the Sadducees could not see how to reconcile the resurrection with the case they had stated. Jesus replied—'In the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being children of the resurrection!'* Here he first refutes the idea, that people would marry in the resurrection; having thus removed the difficulty existing in the minds of the Sadducees, he explained the condition of men in the resurrection; said they could die no more; would be holy like the angels, and be children of God, being children of the resurrection. Connect with this, the uniform doctrine of the Savior and his Apostles, that all men will be raised, and we have the most explicit denial, which could be given, of the doctrine of annihilation and endless misery. There is no attempt to keep this great point in the dark; there is no apparent inability to answer the question proposed; Jesus speaks in a manner which shows that the future was as distinctly seen by him as the present; that he could explain the result of God's government, as well as the duty of man to his fellow man.

* Luke xx. 36.

Look at this subject in another light. We see the Apostles laboring in the most zealous and faithful manner, for the overthrow of corrupted Judaism and the heathen religion; and to set up the christian system in opposition to these. Now can we believe they had no systematized opinions respecting the gospel? If so, how did they know what errors to oppose? Judaism was a regular system, teaching the existence of God, his government, and the result of that government. So was heathenism. They were tangible systems, having their several parts, and teaching certain results. Now can we suppose, that the Apostles had nothing definite to urge in opposition to these? Suppose one of the old philosophers questioning St. Paul after this manner: 'You claim, sir, to be an Apostle of God, inspired to teach the truth, and to oppose the religion of heathen philosophers;—will you tell me wherein we err? Is it wrong to teach that the wicked will be annihilated? or that they will be doomed to endless darkness and pain? or to teach the transmigration of their souls? You say that the living God is the Savior—Can you inform me how many he will save—whether one third, one half, or all?' Now what could the Apostle say, in reply to such interrogatories? If the Bible does not reveal the final condition of the wicked, he could say nothing. Suppose him then, standing in silence before this philosopher, who continues, by saying—'You sir, declare that you speak not in the wisdom of this world, but in the wisdom of God; and guided by that wisdom, you declare that heathenism is false, and that the philosophers are ignorant—tell us, sir, what in heathenism is false. Are we wrong in saying, all who die in the violation of certain laws will be endlessly miserable—wrong in teaching that the penalty of the law is endless

suffering—that only a part of mankind will be heirs of our Elysium'? Thus we see, how utterly unable the Apostle would have been, to stand his ground, when thus opposed and interrogated. He would have met the same difficulty if attacked by the doctors of the law; for while laboring for the overthrow of Judaism, he would be unable to tell what of it was false, and what true. It is morally certain, therefore, that the Bible teaches an entire system of doctrine.

4. The connection between doctrine and morality shows the correctness of our views. Many people have a great aversion to doctrinal preaching. They dislike above all things to hear what are called doctrinal sermons. This state of things, is what might very naturally have been expected, from the style of preaching that has prevailed in years past. Every minister has buckled on the armor of controversy, and appeared on all occasions with his weapons of war. Those who could flourish the sword most skilfully, and dissect an opponent with the most nerve, have been called, not only the best, but the ablest preachers.

The church is now running to the opposite extreme. Now ministers leave the truths of the gospel, and make up their sermons of other matter. Christ and him crucified has become too antiquated to suit the modern taste. The pulpit, with many, is divorced from the great doctrines of grace and redemption. Indeed, 'literature, poetry, sculpture, and painting' are beginning to find a place where only the trump of God should be heard. As an indication of the present taste let me refer to the following. 'How many things, dear and lovely, are passing upon earth, and passing away from it, that should come to us here!—the lineaments of mortal love fading away into heaven—the holy hand of maternal tenderness, laid upon the inno-

cent forehead—the clasp of affection, that could die for its object—the calm and resolved brow, that is ready to sacrifice fortune, fame, life itself for its dear integrity—the sense of all things beautiful, and brave, and heroic, breathing in literature, in poetry, in the marble and on the canvass, and thrilling through the heart of the world!—yet does one thrill of all this touch the cold and stately pulpit?*

Nothing could give us greater surprise, than the utterance of such sentiments. What! are we to leave that great system which God has given to enlighten and save the world, and seek the accomplishment of this work by the 'beautiful, and brave, and heroic things of earth?' The moment a minister does this, he ceases to be a man of God, and becomes a man of the world; he is no longer clothed with power and the garments of salvation; and though his word may 'thrill through the heart of the world,' it can do no more for its renovation, than the thrilling romance, or a disquisition upon philosophy.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am far from thinking, that the minister should not bring his instructions to bear upon every relation of life, upon every pursuit of man, and every condition of society. He should have a word for the young and the old; for the grave and the gay; for the idle and the industrious; for the man of business and the man of pleasure; for those with affections fresh and vigorous, and those with hearts seared by adversity and sin. He should enlighten the ignorant, warn the careless, awaken the unconcerned, reprove the wicked, and encourage the penitent. But all this should be done by the gospel; for this has a 'word for each in due season;' if right-

* Rev. O. Dewey's Sermon preached at the opening of the 'Church of the Messiah' in New York.

ly divided,* it 'can make us wise unto salvation;'† and it is 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;'‡ and can 'make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work.' I would say, therefore, with the Apostle, 'Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.'§ There were never more stirring, successful and interesting preachers, than Jesus and the Apostles; and yet, they preached both doctrine and morality; they pointed out with unflinching boldness and faithfulness, the sins and duties of man, and enforced their precepts by the great doctrines of redemption; they relied on doctrine for the effect of every moral instruction. Thus Jesus says,—'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'‖ Here the Savior holds up God as the great pattern of all perfection; lays before his hearers the height, depth, strength, and freeness of his love, that they may be induced to love each other, and be kind to the unthankful; he stops not with uttering, in the voice of divine authority, the command—'love your enemies;' but he places before them an example of such love; and shows that they and all sinners, are loved as he requires them to love. The Apostles pursue the same course. Thus St. John says—'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent

* 2 Tim. ii. 15. † 2 Tim. iii. 15. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.
§ 1 Tim. iv. 16. ‖ Mat. v. 44, 45.

his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'* Such is the doctrine. 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.'† Such is the duty enforced by this doctrine. Thus every moral precept of the gospel must be enforced by doctrine, or it can produce no effect. Doctrine is the lever by which the world is to be lifted from its degradation; doctrine is the sun, the rain and the dew; precept the rule directing how to improve the heart and correct its errors. Many, I know, are saying, it is immaterial what we believe; the great object is a holy life. True, holiness is the grand end which God proposes to accomplish; but his doctrine is the means by which it is to be produced. Doctrine is the cause; holiness, the effect. The farmer is anxious for a rich harvest; but to gain this, he must be careful in the selection of his seed, and faithful in cultivating the earth. Jesus fought not only against ungodly practices, but ungodly doctrines; he warned the world to flee from error; to beware of the doctrine taught by Scribes and Pharisees. To effect its overthrow, and exterminate it from the world, he preached, wrought miracles, endured persecution, lived in poverty, and died upon a cross,—and still we hear it said, that it is immaterial what we believe! Why then the command—'Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine;‡ preach the word?'§ And why the resolution of the Apostle—'I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified?'‖ Why the prayer—'Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth?'¶ The Bible, therefore, does teach a system of doctrine, which is the divinely ap-

* 1 John iv. 10. † 1 John iv. 11.
‡ Titus ii. 1. § 2 Tim. iv. 2. ‖ 1 Cor. ii. 2. ¶ John xvii. 17.

pointed means of converting sinners, and building up the kingdom of holiness.

5. Unless we are correct, the Bible cannot appeal to either of the great master passions of our nature —neither to the fears nor the affections. There is a wide difference of opinion respecting these passions. Some think that fear is the more powerful. Accordingly, they take every method to alarm. To hear them speak of God, one would suppose that he never thought of mercy, love, grace, or compassion, much less conceived the idea of showing pity to the sinner. They describe him as clothed in terror, burning with revenge, impatient to execute the fierceness of his wrath upon the objects of his displeasure. They would persuade the sinner to feel as though walking upon the very brink of infinite danger, as though hanging by a brittle thread over the yawning gulf of ruin, as though just to be hurled to endless perdition. Not satisfied with this, they summon all the wildness of their imagination to aid in describing the place of wo, which they picture to the affrighted, as a prison of infinite horror and anguish, where the soul will writhe and burn, and wail in undying agony.* This terror, we are told, is the only means by which sinners can be reclaimed; and that the religion which is not clothed with it, can do no good.

Others say, that love is the more powerful of these great passions. Accordingly, they preach the goodness of God, his eternal, unchanging, and unbounded goodness. They preach the riches of grace, those unsearchable and immortal riches which God holds in reserve for his people. They believe that goodness leads to repentance, that love awakens love. And in proof of this, they appeal to the effects of kindness in the family circle, in

* It has been said, that some men murder religion to frighten fools with her ghost.

the management of the poor, down-trodden slave, in governing the rude and uncultivated, as well as the refined and exalted. They refer to the influence of a kind act upon the benighted savage, who will hold it in perpetual remembrance, and be a guardian angel to him who performed it, 'when his blood thirsty companions have driven down the stake, and lit the torch of cruelty and death.' 'They would hang the banner of love upon our Bethel-churches, and let it wave upon our Indian missionary stations.' 'They would abrogate the law of terror, and substitute the power of love.'

Now I do not stop to ask which of these passions is the stronger. I have nothing now to do with the particular doctrines of the Bible; I only wish to show, that to be effectual, the Bible must appeal to one or the other of these passions. All history proves that whenever the world has been greatly moved, it has been by fear or love. Look at the present state of the church. Are not those congregations cold, lifeless, and in a languishing state, where neither of these passions is touched? Are not literature and philosophy found to be poor substitutes for a gospel, which moves the whole soul, and wakes up the deepest feelings of the heart?

Do I hear one say, christianity is a reasonable religion, and addresses itself to the understanding? True—but how are we to judge of a system, till we are acquainted with its principles, and its final result? We would have the reason addressed; for we believe, it is only through the reason, that the heart can be reached, as the gospel is fitted and designed to reach it. But how can we address the reason, unless we have some system to preach? The Bible, therefore, can do comparatively nothing, if it does not reveal the termination of the divine government.

6. If our views are not founded in truth, why does the Bible describe the end of the scheme of grace? Its language is, 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.'* 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'† This language admits of no controversy; all agree that it describes the end of the present state of things; and the accomplishment of the great purposes of God's government. Then, there will be no longer a Mediator between God and men; death will have no more dominion; and Christ himself will be subject to the King of kings. I stop not to inquire what all this language means; I only wish to show, that it describes the end of God's scheme of mercy. This is enough for my present purpose. Say, if you please, it means, that the righteous are to be in willing, and the wicked in unwilling subjection; that some are to be raised to glory, and some to shame; I have now no concern with this question; all I wish to show, is, that Paul describes the end of the Savior's reign.

* 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. † Heb. ii. 14. 15.

The promises all point to an end. The Savior came into the world for a particular purpose; that purpose was to do the Father's will. 'Lo I come to do thy will, O God'* Turn now to the promises. 'He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;'† the 'pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;‡ the heathen shall be his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession;§ to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.‖ All these promises have direct reference to the work which the Savior came to perform, and are designed to describe the effect of his labors. They point to the end of his mission. But what do they avail, and why were they given, if they do not reveal what he will accomplish? Does God use words without meaning? For the joy that was set before him Jesus despised the shame, and endured the cross:¶ But what was this joy? In what did it consist? Was it to arise from having saved a part of the human family, or all? It is unnecessary to multiply arguments; for if God has given a revelation to his children, it is perfect. He is a perfect Being; his wisdom is infinite; and, therefore, his revelation must be perfect. It has all the essential parts of a perfect system. It has a design, and a plan for the accomplishment of that design. This plan is universal in its extent, wise in its arrangement, and efficacious in its means. There is nothing superfluous to be taken away, or defective requiring addition. We read of its beginning and end; of its provisions and conquests; and of the perfect agreement between its various parts. The work of the Lord is perfect.

But an objection rises up. Why, says the read-

* Heb. x. 7. † Isai. liii. 11. ‡ Isai. liii. 10. § Ps. ii. 8.
‖ Phil. ii. 10. 11. ¶ Heb. xii. 2.

er, if the Scriptures teach such a system, why are not all agreed respecting it? why is there such a wide difference of opinion respecting the future state? why do one sect hold to the annihilation of the wicked, another to their endless misery, and another to their salvation? Without entering into an examination of the various causes which lead to a difference of opinion, it will be sufficient to say—That the objection, if founded in truth, proves that the Bible teaches no doctrine whatever. On what point in theology is there not a difference of opinion? Are men agreed respecting the trinity, the nature of salvation, the depravity of the heart, and the means of conversion? On all these subjects, there is the same diversity of opinion, that exists respecting the end of God's government. Consequently, if we admit this conclusion, we must say, that the Bible does not teach any doctrine; and that we cannot appeal to it for a decision on any disputed point. We close, therefore, in the comprehensive and sublime language of the poet, to which we give our unqualified assent.

Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life * * * * * *
* * Only star which rose on time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The everlasting hills, pointed the sinner's eye:
By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,
Evangelists, Apostles, men inspired,
And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set
Apart and consecrated to declare
To earth the counsels of the Eternal One,
This book, this holiest, this sublimest book,
Was sent. Heaven's code flows entire
To man, this book contained; defined the bounds
Of vice and virtue; and of life and death;
And what was shadow, what was substance taught.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE UNITY OF GOD.

The unity of God is a doctrine universally received in the christian church. All agree that there is but one God, who is possessed of absolute perfection. As this is not a disputed article of faith, it is unnecessary that I should offer any further proof in its defence, than is requisite to place it distinctly before the mind, and show its variance with the doctrine of the trinity.

1. The Scriptures are express upon this subject. 'The Lord our God is one Lord.'* 'We know that an idol is nothing in the world; and there is none other God but one.'† 'But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.'‡ Now this language means something more than that idols are not 'creators, governors and deities;' it means that there is only one being who is absolutely God, and that of him are all things. Hence we never read of but one supreme Maker, one Governor, one Fountain of goodness and grace; one Object of adoration, and one Being that fills immensity.

2. The self-existence of God proves his unity. God must exist necessarily, or by the will of another. If by the will of another, his existence is derived, he is dependent, not all-wise and all-controlling, and, therefore, not God. Hence the Author of all existence, the great Cause of all causes, must

* Deut. vi. 4. † 1 Cor. viii. 4. ‡ 1 Cor. viii. 6.

exist necessarily, and have every perfection; and if so, it is impossible that there should be two Gods. For instance, there cannot be two infinite powers; for infinite power must be above all, and control all. But if there be two infinite powers, one can neither be above nor controlled by the other. Hence there is but one God.

3. The harmony and order of nature prove the Divine Unity. It is an established maxim, 'adopted in all reasonings from effects to causes, that *no more causes ought to be supposed, than are necessary to account for the effects.* If we keep in view this universally admitted axiom, and trace the connections and analogies, which pervade the several parts of nature, we shall perceive, that it is in the highest degree unreasonable to believe in more Gods than one.'

'The being, who made one blade of grass, might make another; he, who has invented and formed a perfect tree, might invent and form every plant, which grows upon the earth. One intelligent being, therefore, capable of producing a part of the vegetable creation, is capable of producing the whole: so that the supposition of more than one is totally unnecessary. But this supposition is also improbable and absurd. All plants, however various, have many common properties, and are formed according to one general model. They are all nourished by air, earth and moisture; they are all propagated by seed; they are all defended from the severity of the weather by bark; they all have roots, stalks, leaves, adapted to their several functions; and not an instance is known of any species of plant, which does not bear flowers, provided with the admirable apparatus of stamens, pistils or other organs necessary for perfecting the seed. That all these contrivances should have occurred to many independent deities, is incredi-

ble. They form one model, according to which all the various races of vegetables are fashioned, and this model must have been the contrivance of one mind.'*

The same mode of reasoning has been applied to the animal creation; to the connection subsisting between the animal and vegetable kingdoms; and to the relations which the innumerable tribes of plants and animals bear to the solid ground, to the rivers, the seas, the ocean, and the atmosphere.'† It is evident, therefore, from the testimony of nature, that there is but one God; for in every department of nature, we see the marks of the same infinite mind.

Other arguments might be offered in favor of the divine unity; but these are sufficient for our present purpose. We will, therefore, proceed to inquire, in what sense God is one. This we must do, not because the question arises from the subject itself; but because the christian world has long held the strange doctrine, that there are three persons in the Godhead, equal in power, substance, duration and glory. This is thought to be an essential article of christian faith. Those who deny it, are accused of denying the Savior, and being unworthy the christian name. Before proceeding to the main objections to this theory, I wish to offer a few circumstantial arguments against it.

1. It was unknown in the first ages of the church; the fathers had no conception of it. I am aware that great antiquity has been claimed for this doctrine; that those who deny it have been accused of teaching a new heresy. But the trinity in its present form was unknown in the christian church, till as late as the fifth or sixth century.

* Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 59.
† See Yates' Vindication, &c. pp. 60—64.

The council of Nice, held A. D. 325, under the reign of Constantine, adopted, by a majority of votes, what is called the *Nicene Creed.* Whoever will examine this creed, will find, that it contains nothing like the trinity. No one, at that time, thought that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were *co-equal.* The Son was believed to be 'subordinate to the Father in all his operations, and to derive from him all his power and glory. He is called, "*God of God*," whereas the Father was called, "*God of himself*," by which was understood that the existence and nature of the Son were derived from the Father, but that the Father was uncreated, self-existent, and independent. We also remark, that this creed makes no mention of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and contains no hint whatsoever of the doctrines of original sin and vicarious atonement, but employs respecting the end of Christ's advent and death, the sublime and beautiful language of the Scriptures.' In 381 another council decreed that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equal in power and glory. In 431 it was voted in council, that the two natures of Christ make but one person.* In this gradual manner was the trinity brought to its present form, and the faith of the church changed from a belief in the supremacy and sole divinity of the Father to that of three infinite persons in one God. Now are you prepared to receive, without the clearest scriptural proof, a doctrine of which the fathers were ignorant?

2. The doctrine cannot be stated in the language of Scripture. This Trinitarians allow; they admit their inability to bring a single text in which it is

* Those who wish to pursue this investigation, are referred to Priestley's Corruptions, and Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, to which we are indebted for our facts.

said, there are three persons in one God.* But how could the inspired writers have taught the trinity as fully and plainly as many believe they have; and still not use any such language as people now employ to express it? A believer in the doctrine can go to the writings of any Trinitarian, and find language which will clearly and fully express his views; but when he goes to the Bible, he meets no language which he can employ. Does not this render it pretty certain, that the inspired writers were not Trinitarians?

This argument derives additional weight, when we consider the character of the doctrine in question. It is a mystery, something wholly inexplicable, and which no man can understand. Now how are we to know that it is revealed in the Bible? There is only one way in which it can be inculcated; and that is, by the very language used in the Trinitarian creed. 'We cannot prove it by *inferences* for all reasoning is out of the question. We cannot show its accordance with the ideas suggested by scripture phrases; for on such a subject, we have no ideas at all; at least, our conceptions being indistinct, every step we take is an insecure, a random, a desperate movement.'

'I may affirm for example, in the hearing of a man ignorant of mathematics, that "the eclipse is one of the conic sections." To these words he annexes no distinct conceptions. The proposition is to him a mystery. He cannot prove it to be false, but neither can he prove it to be true. If he gives his assent, it is purely through confidence in my veracity and superior information.'

'In like manner, we cannot by any deductions from scripture phrases, prove the truth of a propo-

* 1 John v. 7, has been referred to by some, though the best informed Trinitarians now admit it to be an interpolation.

sition, which conveys to us no distinct ideas. If such a proposition be contained in the Bible, we may repeat its exact words, and say, that we believe it to be true, because we believe every part of the Bible to be true. In no other way can the testimony of the Scriptures be of any avail to prove the truth of the proposition.'* It is evident from this reasoning, that the trinity is not taught in the Bible.

3. Is it reasonable to suppose, the God of all wisdom, would give a religion to man, and make its very essence consist in mystery? Would he give to rational beings a doctrine which they cannot receive without an entire surrender of the understanding? Duffield says—'That there is something altogether unintelligible in the fact of three distinct personal subsistences, in the same divine essence, is not to be denied.'† J. Wesley says—'But the manner how, (God can be three in one) I do not comprehend, and I do not believe it.'‡ According to this, christianity is built upon unintellible propositions; its essence is mystery. But the Scriptures know nothing of such a mystery, one wholly incomprehensible. St. Paul says—How that by revelation he *made known* unto me the mystery—whereby when ye read, ye may *understand* my *knowledge in the mystery* of Christ.§ He explains this mystery, and shows it to be the great truth that grace is universal, that Gentiles as well as Jews are to be heirs of salvation.‖ Therefore, the scriptural import of the word mystery is not something irrational, contradictory, and to human reason absurd; but something unknown, and which can be revealed. But I shall be asked,

* Yates.
† Duffield on Regeneration, p. 12.
‡ Wesley's Works, vol. vii. p. 212. 1st Amer. ed.
§ Eph. iii. 3. 4. ‖ Rom. xi. 25; Eph. i. 9. 10; iii. 5—7.

if the Bible does not contain things above human comprehension, and which reason can never grasp in this world? Most certainly it does; but there is nothing in these absurd or contradictory; all we can see of them is consistent and reasonable; but we cannot see all. There is the same mystery in nature; it surrounds us on every hand; it is in the air we breathe; the food we eat; the water we drink; and the earth upon which we tread. But nature has not a single mystery like the trinity; as far as we can read its laws, all is harmony and perfection. Not so with the trinity. The first principles of this involve contradictions, so that none can receive it without first making an entire surrender of the understanding. It is not, therefore, like the mystery of the Bible, which can be understood and made known; and consequently, I cannot believe it.

4. The endless diversity of opinion respecting the trinity, disproves it. There are hardly two Trinitarians who state the doctrine alike; almost every advocate has a theory of his own. Bishop Stillingfleet, it has been said, speaks of five different trinities, radically distinct from each other. First—the Ciceronian trinity, which represents the three persons, as the three relations of God to his creatures. Second—the Cartesian trinity, in which the three persons are three infinite minds. Third—the Platonic trinity, which consists of three coeternal beings, two of which are subordinate to the other. Fourth—the Aristotelian trinity, in which the three persons are one numerical substance. Fifth—the mystical trinity, which no conscientious believer should presume to explain. Another writer has discovered forty particulars, in which Trinitarians are at variance among themselves, in their sense of this doctrine. He could with the same ease have found forty more. In a

work published some years ago, the author gives a classification of the opinions which have been entertained concerning the trinity, by some of the most eminent English divines; and in this classification, he gives *ten different systems* which have been adopted.* And even here, he says, 'We have only the outlines, the elements of general systems, which have been divided and subdivided into innumerable new and peculiar forms, bearing little resemblance to their original.' Dr. Gill, in explaining the sense in which God is one, speaks against several forms of the trinity. He says: 'Nor is this language to be understood in the Sabellian sense, that God is but one person; for though there is but one God, there are three persons in the Godhead, which the Sabellians deny; who are so called from one Sabellius, who lived in the middle of the third century: but of this more hereafter. Nor is this doctrine to be understood in a *Tritheistic* sense, that is, that there are three essences or beings numerically distinct, which may be said to be but one, because of the same nature; as three men may be said to be one, because of the same human nature; but this is to assert three Gods and not one; this the Trinitarians indeed are often charged with, and they as often deny the charge. For they assert, that there is but one divine essence; though there are different modes of subsisting in it which are called persons; and these possess the whole essence undivided. And this unity is not an unity of parts, which makes one compositum, as the body and soul of man do; for God is a simple and uncompounded Spirit; nor an unity of genus and species, under which may be many singulars of the same kind, but God is one in number and nature, and stands opposed to the poly-

* See Sparks' Enquiry.

theism of the heathens, who had gods many and lords many, 1 Cor. viii. 4. 5. Nor are those passages of scripture which assert the unity of God, to be appropriated to one person only, to the exclusion of the others: but to be considered as including each.'

Thus we see, there is hardly any end to the different theories on this subject. And yet, we are told, it is plainly taught in the Bible! What more suspicious circumstance could attend a doctrine, than such an endless contrariety of opinion? Essential articles of faith surely ought to be revealed with more distinctness. Which, we ask, is the true doctrine, of these various ones? To which must we turn, as the foundation of christian hope? Would it not be well for Trinitarians to settle among themselves, what the trinity is, before they condemn us for not believing it? Such are some of the circumstantial arguments against the trinity. With these in mind, let us proceed to an examination of the doctrine. It may be well, first to give a statement of it in the language of the creed most generally received; and if any should say, this is not our trinity, we reply, here is the only difficulty we have to encounter; for when refuted in one form, its advocates will rise up and say, your arguments do not reach us, for that is not what we call the trinity. We will try, however, and take away so many of the pillars of the system, that it can stand in no form whatever.

In the confession of faith, adopted by the orthodox churches, the doctrine is thus stated—'There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible,' &c. 'In unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; God the

Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.' In the larger catechism we hear the same. 'There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory: although distinguished by their personal properties.' Such is the trinity; and when we consider the peculiar and strange nature of the doctrine, it seems as though a bare statement of it is sufficient to refute it.

1. The doctrine rests upon an impossibility. It is impossible that three infinite persons should make but one God. A person is a real being who has a 'distinct existence and mind;' who has a 'distinct will of his own;' and 'a distinct power of action.' This is the sense in which Trinitarians have defined person. Dr. Walertand says—'By person, I certainly mean a real person, an Hypostasis, no Mode, Attribute, or Property. Each divine Person is an individual intelligent Agent.' How then, can the Godhead be composed of three persons? How can three persons having separate wills, and separate modes of action, be one person? It will not answer to say, the unity is in will and purpose; for this does not make the three one person, any more than a union of will and purpose among three men, proves them to be one person. Neither can it be said, the three persons make one as soul, spirit and body make one; for this would prove God made up of parts, whereas he is simple and indivisible. Nothing will be gained, by saying, the three persons are three modes or relations; for this destroys the idea of person, and teaches that God manifests himself in three different ways.

The difficulty is equally as great, if we say, the three persons mean a threefold distinction in the Godhead; for if the distinction be not in personality, it is only three different manifestations. Thus there is no way in which three persons can be one God, any more than three men can be one man.

But this is not all the difficulty. The trinity represents the three persons as equal in power, wisdom and duration; it speaks of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Now according to this, there are three Gods, each possessing almighty power and infinite wisdom; each being self-existent and independent. But the existence of three Gods is an impossibility. To convince all of this I have only to refer to the argument of Dr. Hopkins against a plurality of Gods. He says—'There can be but one First Cause who exists necessarily, and without beginning; for there can be but one infinite Being. To suppose another, or a second, necessarily excludes the first; and to suppose the first, necessarily excludes the second, and any other infinite Being. The same is evident from the consideration of the divine perfections. God is infinite power, infinite wisdom. But there cannot be two or more infinite wisdoms, because this is a contradiction. Infinite power is all the power there is, or can be, and is clearly inconsistent with any other power distinct from that which is also infinite.'* Nothing can be more clear than this reasoning; it shows the utter impossibility of the existence of three infinite Gods. And yet Trinitarianism says—'There are three Gods, equal in power, wisdom and duration.'

The argument of Dr. Gill is just as conclusive. He says—'God is infinite and incomprehen-

* See Hopkins p. 96.

sible. To suppose two infinities, the one must reach unto, comprehend, and include the other or not; if it does not, then it is not infinite, and so not God; if it does reach unto, comprehend and include the other, then that which is comprehended and included by it is finite, and so not God; therefore, it is clear there cannot be more infinities than one: and if but one infinite, then but one God.'* Thus the existence of more than one infinite Being is impossible; and therefore, the article which teaches that there are three, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, cannot be true.

2. The trinity cannot be true, because a contradiction in terms. It is contradictory to say, a son is co-existent with his father; and yet the trinity rests upon this. It is no removal of the difficulty to say, Father and Son are correlates; they suppose each other; they commence and exist together; for though the Son may be co-existent with the relationship of father, he is not co-existent with the Being who sustains this relationship.

Again—It is a contradiction to say, the Son is independent of the Father; for sonship necessarily implies dependence. If not used to denote that Jesus derived his existence, I can see no propriety in the term. Derived existence is its usual meaning. It is sometimes employed to denote adoption, and to signify that one has been the pupil of another; but here also, it implies dependence. Let it not be said, the terms Father and Son are simply names by which the first two persons in the trinity have chosen to be distinguished, that really one is no more Father or Son than the other; for throughout the Scriptures the distinction is kept up; and the Son is always spoken of as subordi-

* See Gill as abridged by Stoughton, pp. 89, 90.

nate to the Father, as coming from, and returning to him, as being indebted to him for wisdom, grace and power. Besides, we never put the Son in the place of the Father; nor the Father in the place of the Son; but we always conceive of them as two distinct beings, one sustaining the relation of Father, and the other the relation of Son.

There is only one way in which any can seek to avoid these contradictions; and that is by saying, Son is a term used with reference to the human nature of Christ. But this is rather increasing the difficulty; for to say 'God the Son,' is a direct contradiction, for God is infinite and Son finite. Let it not be replied, there is a union of finite and infinite in the Son; for then we ask, which is the Son, the finite or the infinite? If the finite, we have again the contradiction of God the Son; if the infinite, the previous question is provoked; how can the Son be equal to the Father? Perhaps it will be said, the union of the finite and the infinite constitute the Son. Then we reply, there was no Son till the incarnation of Jesus, whereas Trinitarianism says, the Son is co-existent with the Father. Thus there is no method by which we can avoid the contradictions which the trinity involves. The Father must necessarily be prior and superior to the Son. If he be not, there is no meaning in the terms Father and Son.

3. The trinity cannot be true, because it teaches that Christ is God and man at the same time; in other words, that he is both finite and infinite. There are numerous passages of Scripture in which Christ asserts his inferiority to the Father. 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.'* 'I go unto my Father,

* Mark xiii. 32.

for my Father is greater than I.'* 'I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me.'† In reply to these, Trinitarians say, he is here speaking in his human nature; and that while in his human nature, he is dependent, ignorant and weak, in his divine, he is independent, infinite in wisdom, and almighty in power. According to this, he knows all things, and yet does not know all things; he has all power, and yet has not all power; he is independent, and yet as dependent as man. Now were I to use language in this way respecting myself, you would call me the veriest trifler in existence. Suppose that with one ear I am totally deaf; and that I am called into a court to testify respecting a conversation which passed in my presence between two persons. Suppose that in giving my testimony, I say. I cannot imagine why I am called here; for I am ignorant of this whole case, I did not hear the conversation. In reply, I am told that I was present and must have heard it; and that I have been heard to relate it often,—to which I answer, oh! I mean that with my deaf ear, I did not hear; with the other, I heard all. Now surely the court would call this trifling; and yet the case is a fair representation of the theory before us; for according to this, Jesus says, 'of himself he can do nothing,' when of himself he can do all things.

Besides—there is no evidence that when Christ speaks of his inferiority to the Father, he simply refers to his human nature. He gives us no intimation of being God and man. He does not say, I am now speaking in my human, and now in my divine nature. I know it will be said—Unless he

* John xiv. 28. † John v. 30.

was 'God omniscient and omnipotent, and still a feeble man, and of imperfect knowledge,'* we cannot account for his being represented as the Creator of all things in heaven and in earth, and at the same time, 'a man of sorrows and of imperfect knowledge.' But, nothing can be more futile than this reasoning; for the very power by which Jesus created was given him. Hear the Apostle—'For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; * * and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; * * for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.'† Thus all his fulness, even the power by which he created, was received of God.

Again—It has been said, Christ must be God and man, or he could not act as Judge. But in relation to this, he says—'For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.'‡ Thus his power to read the heart and understand the motive, was given him. And so of all the powers he possessed. He taught as never man taught; but it was the Father speaking through him. He quickened into life the slumbering dead; but it was the Father working through him. He triumphed over sin, death and hell; but it was because God gave the victory through him. Thus all those works on which Trinitarians rely to prove that Christ was God, were performed by power which he received of the Father, so that in creating, judging, working miracles, teaching, saving and achieving victories, he was inferior to the Father.

Here then, we see there is no evidence that

* Quoted from Professor Stuart.

† Col. i. 16—19. ‡ John v. 26. 27.

Christ is God and man. Evidence? How can there be evidence of an impossibility? 'Our idea of God is of an infinite being; our idea of man is of a finite being; and we perceive that the same thing cannot be both infinite and finite. There is nothing clear in language, no proposition of any sort can be affirmed to be true, if we cannot affirm this to be true,—that it is impossible that the same being should be finite and infinite; or in other words, that it is impossible that the same being should be man and God.'

4. The trinity cannot be true, because Christ is always spoken of as a being distinct from the Father. Thus Paul says—'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men.'* Now if Christ be not distinct from God, how can he be a mediator between God and man? A mediator necessarily implies the existence of three parties—the two between whom the difficulty exists, and the one who makes the reconciliation. Jesus, therefore, must be distinct from God. Thus we read—'But to us there is but *one* God, the *Father*, of whom are all things, and we in him; and *one Lord, Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things, and we by him.' This language teaches: First. That the one self-existent God is *one Person*, viz. the Father. This one person, it styles *God*, and calls him the *Father*. Second. That this one God is the *source* of all things—*of whom are all things*. Third. That Jesus Christ, the one Lord, is a person as distinct from the Being of God, as he is from the *Person* of the Father—*and one Lord Jesus Christ*. Fourth. That Jesus Christ, the one Lord, is the Medium, or Agent through whom, or by whom God displays his fulness, in the production of events—*By whom are all things*.†

* 1 Cor. viii. 6. † Abridged from the Bible News.

This reasoning accords with the general language of the New Testament. Take a few cases—'We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'—'Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ'—'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.' But this is not all. Jesus is represented as coming from God, and returning to him; but if he be the very God, he comes from himself, and returns to himself. Jesus, therefore, cannot be God. Besides he says —My Father is greater than I. Now how could this be, if Christ be God himself? 'My Father is greater than I.' Hence he prayed to the Father—he gave thanks to the Father. It is said—He was chosen by God—appointed by God—sanctified by God—inspired by God—anointed by God—given by God. Now if you say Christ was God, you make him appoint, choose, sanctify, give, and anoint himself. You make him equal with the Father, when he says, he is inferior to him; you make him God, when he says, he is the Son of God—the servant of God.

5. The trinity cannot be true, because there is no evidence of three Gods. To be satisfied of this, you have only to consider, that by the Holy Spirit is '*intended the same as the fulness of God.*' The general language of Scripture proves this. Thus it is represented as being *shed* on us abundantly through Jesus Christ; *given without measure* to the Savior, but with measure to man. Now could we speak of *shedding forth a person;* and of giving a person by measure? But if by the Holy Spirit, the fulness of God be intended, then it is very proper to say, *shed forth*, and *given by measure.* Second. The Spirit is said to dwell in holy men. Thus the Apostles were called the temple, in which *dwelt* the Holy Spirit. But could the

third person of the trinity dwell in a man? Third. It is represented as being *given*. 'How much more shall your heavenly Father *give* the Holy Spirit to them that ask him'? Fourth. Men are said to *receive* the Holy Spirit. 'Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed'? Now the idea of receiving a person is too inconsistent to be admitted. Fifth. Persons are said to be filled with the Holy Spirit; but could we talk of being '*filled with God*'? Sixth. Christ is said to be anointed of God with the Holy Ghost. How then can the Holy Ghost be a person?

Does any one say, the Spirit must be a person, for it is represented as speaking and being blasphemed? I answer—So is wisdom personified, and represented as standing in the street, stretching forth her hand, laughing at the simple, and mocking them in the day of their judgment. Charity is personified, and represented as suffering, hoping and believing. Miracles are personified, and represented as bearing *witness* of Jesus, and the truth of his word.

'Personification is a common figure in all languages, but is in none so frequent as those of the East. Hence almost all the common events and conditions of human life, and almost every power and disposition of the human mind is personified in the Holy Scriptures. Considering, therefore, the very frequent mention of the influence of God in the writings of the New Testament, it would have been truly surprising, if this affection had not been occasionally described as possessing personal properties; and if we examine the passages, in which it is represented, the figure will probably appear in no instance forced and unnatural, even to the ears of those accustomed to the plainer diction of western countries.'

As an instance of this personification, take the

language of Peter—speaking of the Savior's resurrection, he says:—'We are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit, which God hath given to them that obey him.' But how did the Holy Spirit witness these things?' We answer, by the works which the Apostles performed, through its agency; for God would not give miraculous powers to men preaching a falsehood. This case, therefore, is directly against the real personality of the Spirit; for it was *in the Apostles*, and gave them their power; it was *poured out* upon them on the day of Pentecost. R. Watson, in his Theological Institutes, (page 225) says, unless the Holy Ghost is God, he could not be blasphemed. But this argument would make him greater than the Father or the Son; for the sin against the Holy Ghost was greater than any other. His reasoning, therefore, is inconclusive. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was ascribing the miracles of Christ to a wicked spirit; and it was greater than any other sin, because miracles were the fullest evidence which could be given, that God was with him. Thus blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, was speaking reproachfully of the divine agency in Jesus. How idle then, to say, this proves that the Holy Spirit is a person.

If it be a person, why is not the Father said to love it, as he loves the Son? Why is it not said to love the world, as the Father and Son are said to love it? Why are not mankind required to love it, as they are to love the Father and the Son? Why are we never commanded to worship it? Why is there no instance in the Bible, of its being worshipped? Why will the redeemed only sing praise to *God* and the *Lamb*? Why did Jesus say —no one but the Father knew the day when Jerusalem would be destroyed? These questions no Trinitarian can answer; they show most conclu-

sively, that the Holy Spirit is the divine fullness given to the Savior, Prophets and Apostles, by which they wrought miracles and revealed God's will. By this they were inspired and directed. The whole truth is set forth in the Savior's promise to send the Comforter, who should abide with his followers. This Comforter came in the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit, or the communication of miraculous gifts. We must be right; for how could it be said—one divine being *poured out* another?

Such are some of the arguments which may be offered against the trinity. Before dismissing this subject, it seems proper that I should consider a few of the arguments on which the trinity is thought to rest.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'* Here it is said, Jesus is called God—*the word was God.* But in what sense was he God—the highest and fullest sense? Was he the self-existent, eternal God? The word God is sometimes used in a subordinate sense. Thus the Almighty says to Moses, 'I have made thee a *God* to Pharaoh;' and to the Jews, he gave this command, 'Thou shalt not revile the gods,' meaning the magistrates. And in this subordinate sense, the word God is applied to Jesus. Look at the text again: 'In the beginning was the word; and the word was *with* God, and the word was God.' Now here the same word which was called God, was *with* God, so that, unless, when applied to Jesus, it is used in a subordinate sense, you charge the Evangelist with saying, God was *with himself!* *With* God. To be with a person in this sense, implies dependence, inferiority; and as Christ was *with* God, he must be subordinate to him.

* John i. 1.

Again—It is said, Jesus is 'equal with God,'* and, therefore, the trinity must be true. But this does not prove a trinity of Gods, neither does it prove that the Holy Ghost is equal with God. Besides—In what sense is Christ equal with God? He says—He can of himself do nothing, that all his wisdom and power were given him. Not only so—if Christ be God, then the phrase, 'equal with God,' signifies that Jesus is equal with himself, which is an absurdity. 'Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Now to be in the form of a being, is to be like a being; but if Jesus was the very God, how could we say he was in the form of God? That would be like saying, a man was in the form of himself. Perhaps it will be replied, Jesus is the second person in the trinity, and is like the first. But if the first and second be one and the same, this is no removal of the difficulty. Nor is this all. Some Trinitarians translate the phrase, *equal with God—like God:* Being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be like God; and therefore, this passage is no proof that Jesus is the almighty and eternal God. In one place he is called the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Thus he is like him—in the form of him, or image of him; but unless a being can be like himself, in the form of himself, and with himself, all these passages, on which so much reliance is placed by the Trinitarians, prove Jesus to be inferior to the Father.

Again—The form of baptism is thought to prove the trinity—'Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.' But if this proves the trinity, then I can prove Moses to be God; for

* Philip. ii. 6.

all the Israelites were baptized into Moses and in the cloud and in the sea. Perhaps, you will say, this is a different case, for here the Son and Holy Spirit are associated with God. But this proves nothing, for we find the name of men associated with God. Thus the Jews were commanded to believe the Lord God and his prophets; but would you say the prophets were equal with God? Look at the way in which Jesus begins his address to his Apostles, when he sends them out to preach. All power, he says, all power in heaven and in earth, is given me. Go ye, therefore, &c.* Now I ask, if the self-existent God could have power given him? If not, the passage is no proof of the trinity.

But I need not enlarge; for the trinity is opposed to all our ideas of God, and to the uniform language of the Bible. There is ONE GOD, and ONE LORD, Jesus Christ.

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGINAL SIN.

Divines have represented sin to be of two kinds, *original* and *actual*. Actual sin is a direct violation of God's law, by one who has the right use of his powers. Original sin is that whereby our whole nature is corrupted and rendered contrary to the law of God. The latter is thus described in the confession of faith adopted at the Theological School in Andover. 'That in consequence of his [Adam's] disobedience, all his descendants were constituted sinners: that by nature every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God, and that previously to the renewing grace of the Divine Spirit, all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God; that being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation.'

In the Assembly's Catechism, it is thus stated—'Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in the first transgression. The fall did bring man into a state of sin and misery. The sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, the corruption of his whole na-

ture, which is commonly called original sin, together with all the actual transgressions which proceed from it. All mankind by the fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever.'

To this doctrine I have many objections.

1. It rests on assumed premises. It assumes that a covenant was made with Adam for all his posterity, which would subject them, in case of his disobedience, to all its consequences. This covenant is thus stated in the creed which I have already quoted. '*The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in the first transgression.*' Now where have we any evidence that such a covenant was made? Where is it stated, that 'Adam is the federal head of his posterity, or that their fate was involved in what he did?' Turn to the account of Adam as given in Genesis. 'And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying,—Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'* No allusion is here made to any covenant involving the fate of Adam's posterity. And yet, this was the very time when it should have been stated, that Adam might see the awful consequences which would result from disobedience, and thereby be induced to resist temptation. It will not answer to say, Adam was ignorant of the covenant; for how could it have been made

* Gen. ii. 15—17.

with him, without his knowledge? Why, then, if such a covenant was in existence, was nothing said respecting it? Perhaps we shall find it in the threatening made after transgression. 'And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it thou wast taken: for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.'* Now why is nothing said respecting the consequences of this transgression to Adam's posterity? Will you say, because he had none? Then turn to the curse pronounced upon the woman. 'Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.'† It is not then, because Adam had no posterity; for here it is contemplated. We ask therefore, again, why God was silent respecting the effects of violating his law, as they were to be felt by his posterity? Why did he not say, they would be brought into the world in consequence of this, totally corrupt, and exposed to endless damnation? But so far from saying this, he does not declare that there shall be any moral effect whatever produced upon his posterity; he does not intimate the least change in their moral constitution. It is all assumption, therefore, to say such a covenant was made with Adam.

2. The penalty of the law did not relate to any

* Gen. iii. 17—19. † Gen. iii. 16.

such change in Adam's moral constitution as this doctrine supposes. This penalty is thus expressed. 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Look at the conduct of Adam immediately after the transgression, and you will see the sense in which he died. 'And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.'† Here we see the feeling of guilt and shame; he was like the child which has transgressed the law of his father, unwilling and afraid to come into his presence. His death, then, was simply moral; he died to innocence; there was nothing affected but his mind and heart; no change took place in his moral or physical constitution.

By examining the use of the words *die* and *death*, we shall see that they are often employed in this sense. 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days;) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.‡ Death here means all the evils that would come upon the Israelites for their disobedience; and life all the blessings that would come upon them for their obedience; it is the opposite of happiness, peace, and prosperity; it is guilt, alienation, hatred. By Jeremiah, God says—'Behold I have set before you the way of life and the way of death.'‖ In the New Testament, we read—'If a man keep my

* Gen. ii. 17. † Gen. iii. 8. ‡ Deut. xxx. 19. 20.
‖ Jer. xxi. 8.

sayings, he shall never see death.' 'We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.' 'To be carnally minded is death.'* Thus the death experienced by Adam was a moral death—he became a sinner.

3. It is contrary to the account of Moses, to say, that a change was produced in the constitution of Adam, by the first sin. He represents man as made of the dust of the earth, which is not the material for immortality. It is as natural for everything human to wear out, and go into a state of decay, as for the leaves to fall, and the grass to fade, in autumn. The very nature of the human constitution shows, that it was not designed for an endless existence on earth. Look at the different stages of man's life. See the helplessness of infancy; the sprightliness of youth; the vigor of manhood; and the decrepitude of old age. Here we see the growth, maturity and decay of the human system. In this respect, it is like that of all animals. Nothing which God has made lives forever. Sin, therefore, does not make us mortal; we were originally constituted mortal. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'† Dust thou *art;* for thou wast made of dust; and not dust hast thou become, because of thy sin. All those criticisms, therefore, designed to show that sin rendered man mortal, are wholly against the account of Moses.‡

4. Adam was not only mortal, but a being of all the appetites and passions common to man. This is certain from the language of Paul—'For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same

* John v. 24; James i. 15; v. 20; 1 John iii. 14; Eph. ii. 1.
† Gen. iii. 19. ‡ See Clarke on Gen. ii. 17.

in hope.'* Unless man was thus originally constituted, why did he so easily fall a prey to temptation? We see no long and violent struggles against sin; no shrinking with the horror of an immaculate being from the thought of evil; his whole course was just what would be expected from a man who knew nothing by experience of sin or its consequences. Suppose the common opinion of his original state correct; and that before transgression he had a nature entirely holy, how could he commit a single sin? 'A single sin implies a previous sinful disposition. To make him a sinner then, after he had been created at first holy, must have been an immediate act of God.' This orthodox writers have admitted. The celebrated Dr. Emmons says—'It is in vain to attempt to account for the first sin of the first man, by the instrumentality of second causes. And until we are willing to admit the interposition of the Supreme First Cause, we must be content to consider the fall of Adam as an unfathomable mystery.'† Therefore, we must either say with Dr. Emmons, that God by '*a divine energy took hold of his* [Adam's] *heart, and led him into sin*,' or say that he was made subject to vanity, with powers capable of virtue and of sin. Now we have no evidence of such divine agency in rendering man sinful. Adam does not accuse his Maker of compelling him to transgress; we see nothing but the operation of second causes, such as now tempt those who go astray. Hence Adam had the same appetites and passions, the same propensities to sin, that his posterity have.

5. It is contrary to the known effects of vice to suppose that any sudden and total change was produced in the moral and natural constitution of

* Rom. viii. 20. † Emmons' sermons printed at Wrentham, 1800, p. 292.

Adam by the first sin. We have all read the high wrought descriptions of the happy state of Adam before the transgression; of the perfectly docile nature of all the creatures which God had made; and of the perfect beauty and glory which reigned in the garden where he was placed. Milton says:

> 'About them frisking played
> All beasts of th' earth, since wild, and of all chase,
> In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
> Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
> Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
> Gamboled before them; the unwieldy elephant
> To make them mirth, used all his might and wreathed
> His lithe proboscis.'

Admit the truth of all this, and the question arises, how sin could instantly change the whole constitution of the moral, animal and physical world. According to this theory, the whole nature of our first parents, by a single act of disobedience, underwent an instantaneous and radical change, so that what in them before was perfect, pure and holy, became, at once, corrupt and sinful in the extreme; every bad passion, unhallowed desire and vicious propensity, instantaneously awoke in their bosoms, and they were thoroughly depraved.

Now I would ask, 'If it is not a very singular and unaccountable fact, if a fact it be, that one sin should thus suddenly destroy all that is good and perfect in man; contaminate and change his whole nature; and create a disposition, and a kind of necessity to commit every other sin? Is this according to the constitution of our nature? Do we find that the violation of one of the divine commands, immediately disqualifies a person to obey any of the rest of these commands, and creates a disposition to violate them all? Do we not rather see those around us, who are guilty of some sins, and

yet avoid the commission of many others, and live in the habitual practice of many virtues? How happens it, that one sin should have made such havoc and ruin in the moral constitution of our progenitor, which was at best as perfect as ours; and yet many sins in us, do not entirely destroy our moral powers, and incapacitate us for goodness? Nor is this all. How should the sin of Adam have produced such an effect upon his natural constitution?' How should it have made him mortal? Is there any way by which we can account for such a change? Besides—how could Adam's sin have changed the disposition of the creatures, which Milton describes as so peaceful? Is it possible to conceive of one act tainting, not only the whole moral world, but the whole animal? For myself I am fully persuaded that this is all romance, that it is the work of fiction, that it has no higher foundation than the fruitful imagination of a Milton! Perhaps it will be said, this is not fiction, for God made man in his own image, which he does not now naturally possess; and, therefore, he is a fallen being. But I say every child is born into the world with as much of the image of God, as Adam had when he was created. The language of the Savior proves this. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Now how could the Savior have thus spoken, if little children are totally depraved—if there be no good thing within them? Little children, therefore, must possess naturally the image of God. It will avail nothing to say, they have not righteousness; for Adam could not have been created with this, since it is obedience, love, gratitude; it is a virtue of the heart, and not a faculty. Hence his being created in God's image, denotes that he

was created with intellectual and moral faculties.* If Adam had been absolutely perfect and holy, he could not have sinned; he could not have yielded to temptation. Unless he had the passions belonging to human nature, he would have been incapable of temptation.† The voice of the tempter could have made no impression upon him; for there was nothing in his nature to respond to it, any more than there is in God himself.

Thus we see there was no sudden and total change produced in the natural and moral constitution of Adam by his first sin. We have the same natural and moral constitution which he had; and consequently the common opinion about the fall is altogether imaginary. Adam fell; but it was simply a fall from innocence to sin; such a fall as any man would now experience, if placed in the world as Adam was. His fall was yielding to temptation, giving way to his animal nature. Such a fall could not affect his posterity, in any different way from what the sin of a parent will now affect his children. This will be admitted by all, who are convinced that Adam was constituted as we are. Being anxious to remove all doubts as to the doctrine of original sin, I wish to inquire how, even admitting that Adam fell, ac-

* The great prerogative of man is his being made in the image of God, which a writer in the Apocrypha (Wisd. ii. 2.) calls an image of his own eternity, man being designed to be immortal. But the great superiority of the intellectual faculties of man, and the dominion which by this means he possesses over the brute creation, bring him to a near resemblance to his Maker, make him a proper subject of his moral government, and fit him for immortality, in preference to other creatures. Priestley's Notes on the Scriptures.

† Divines have laid great stress upon the declaration, that God made man upright, (Eccle. vii. 29.) but if this means that he was absolutely holy, so that, as Dr. Emmons says, satan could not tempt him, how shall we explain the remainder of the verse—*they have sought out many inventions?*

cording to the popular theory, we could have sinned in him, his disobedience could have rendered us transgressors? We have no evidence that there was any different connection subsisting between Adam and his posterity, than what subsists between parents and their children now. But who would think of saying a child was guilty for what its father did! Especially, who would say, that a child born after the commission of a crime by its parent, should be held accountable for that crime? Suppose our government should arraign a young man at the bar of justice, and charge him with being guilty for acts committed by his father before he was born? And suppose he should be doomed to prison for those acts—how long would the people allow him to remain there? But why not? He had just as much agency in that, as I had in the sin of Adam; for which it is said, I am as guilty as Adam, and can as justly be punished. I cannot set forth the error of this doctrine more clearly, than by borrowing the language of Professor Stuart.

He says—'According to the common theory of *imputation*, . . . the sin of one man is charged upon all his posterity, who are condemned to everlasting death because of it, antecedent to, and independently of, any voluntary emotion or action on their part. But this idea seems to be attended with some serious difficulties; for, it appears to contradict the essential principles of our moral consciousness. We never did, and we never can, feel guilty of another's act, which was done without any knowledge or concurrence of our own. We may just as well say, that we can appropriate to ourselves, and make our own, the righteousness of another, as his unrighteousness. But we can never, in either case, even force ourselves into a consciousness that any act is really our own, except

one in which we have had a personal and voluntary concern. A transfer of moral turpitude is just as impossible as a transfer of souls.'* This writer goes still further; he shows that it would be the rankest injustice to punish men for the sin of Adam. 'Such an imputation, he says, as that in question, would be in direct opposition to the first principles of moral justice, as conceived of by us, or as represented in the Bible. That "the son shall not die for the iniquity of the father," is as true as that "the father shall not die for the iniquity of the son;" as God has most fully declared in Ezek. xviii.'

'. . . Those who hold this theory, usually maintain that our depravity is not only *connate* and *innate*, but that being such, it is also the *punishment* of Adam's sin which is imputed to us. There are, however, some very formidable difficulties in the way of this. For, the sin, in this case, of Adam's posterity, i. e. their *original* sin, is, by the very ground of the theory, merely *putative*, not real and actual. But what is the punishment? *Actual*, to be sure, according to the statement of those who advocate this theory; and actual, indeed, to a tremendous degree. The punishment begins with our being; it is connate and innate, and contains within itself not only the commencement of a misery that is naturally without end, but is, at the same time, the root and ground of all other sins which we commit, and which serve unspeakably to augment our condemnation and misery. Now can the human mind well conceive, that perfect justice would punish with actual and everlasting and inevitable corruption and misery, beings who are sinners only *putatively*, i. e. in mere supposition and not in fact? For myself I

* Stuart's Com. on Rom.

can only say, that all the elements of my moral nature set themselves spontaneously in array against such a representation as this. It is one of those cases which makes it necessary for me to be made over again, and to have new and different faculties, before I can admit its truth.'* Add to this reasoning the fact, that we are never said to be punished for Adam's sin, but for our own, and the argument is unanswerable. The Bible says nothing of our being exposed to endless damnation for the sin of Adam. On the contrary, it teaches, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; that those who do wrong shall receive for that wrong; that God will render to every man according to *his* works. This is the uniform language of the Bible. Every man shall suffer for *his own* sins, and not for the sins of another. But the doctrine of original sin teaches, that for the offence of Adam millions are exposed to endless damnation, and that too, under the government of a righteous and merciful God!! Thus, in direct opposition to the Scriptures, it declares that the Son shall bear the iniquity of the father! What cruelty! Who can receive a system which ascribes such injustice to Jehovah!

* Stuart's Com. on Rom.

CHAPTER V.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

In the previous chapter, we have shown, that Adam was created with all the appetites and passions which are common to human nature; that his sin was the violation of a revealed law, and produced no more change in his natural or moral constitution than sin now does; and that no other consequences followed, either directly or indirectly, to his posterity, than what now follow sin. If, therefore, men are born into the world totally depraved, it is not on account of Adam's sin; it is because they were originally so constituted of God. How generally the doctrine of total depravity is believed, I am unable to say. Religious sects experience great changes in their views, long before any appear in their creeds. It is certain that an important change is going on among those sects who have heretofore advocated the doctrine in question. Some have spoken out boldly and decidedly against it, and advanced sentiments as honorable to God as they are encouraging to man. But the creeds remain unaltered. Indeed, the new views are claimed to be only an explanation of the old theory, a removal of the mist in which it has been involved. Call them what you please, the removal of the error is all we ask.

In the Westminster Confession, the doctrine is thus stated—'Man in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God. Man by his fall

into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself or prepare himself thereto.' In the creed adopted at the Theological School in Andover, it is thus stated—'By nature every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God, and previously to the renewing agency of the Divine Spirit, all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God, being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation.' Edwards says—'Man's nature is wholly infected with this enmity against God. Every faculty and principle of action is wholly under the dominion of enmity against God. Every faculty is entirely and perfectly subdued under it, and enslaved by it. The understanding is under the reigning power of this enmity. The will is wholly under the reigning power of it. All the affections are governed by enmity against God; there is not one affection, nor one desire, that a natural man has, or that he is ever stirred up to act from, but what contains in it enmity against God. A natural man is all full of enmity against God, as any viper or venomous beast is full of poison.' 'Hanging by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing around, ready every moment to burn it asunder, you have nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you can do to induce God to spare you one moment.'

In the examination of this doctrine, we shall be brief.

I. We ask, if it has any proof from Scripture.

'God,' says Moses, 'saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'* This is regarded as very conclusive evidence that men are totally corrupt; but to see that such is not the case, we have only to consider that it relates to the situation of the world before the flood, and to the aggravated wickedness which then prevailed. The phrase *every imagination of the thoughts*, is to be understood as such language is, when now used. How common to say, of very wicked men, 'they are wholly given to evil;' when nothing more is intended, than that they have become shamefully vicious. Moses did not use this phrase in its unlimited sense; for he says, *all flesh* had corrupted their ways, when Noah and his family were exceptions; and, therefore, some hearts were not wholly evil. Besides, the phrase *had corrupted*, shows that Moses was describing the general wickedness into which the antediluvian world had fallen: they *had corrupted* their way—not they were born corrupt. He was speaking of the sins into which they had gone, not the sin in which they were born. St. Paul, quoting from David, has similar language. 'They are all *gone out* of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' Now this proves nothing with regard to original depravity; it simply proves that all are sinful, that all have *gone* astray, *become* wicked, that none seek after God. To how many would this language be applicable, in whom some excellent qualities are visible. It is a common way of describing those given up to irreligion; but instead of teaching that they were born sinful, it teaches the reverse; for it says—they *have gone astray*.

* Gen. vi. 5.

David says—'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.'* That this language can have no reference to original depravity will be evident when we consider that it was spoken with reference to a sin the most disgraceful ever committed by man. Now when thus confessing his wickedness he surely would not use language which would fully justify him in the commission of every sin; and yet such is the case, if he asserted that he was born totally depraved. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that he uses a strong figurative expression, to denote the greatness of his guilt? He felt himself deeply wicked, odious in the sight of God; and how could this be more forcibly expressed than to represent himself as shapen in iniquity and conceived *in sin?*†

Again—'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.'‡ By heart here we understand the same as in those texts which speak of a 'proud heart;' a 'contrite heart;' a 'hardened heart;' an 'unclean heart;' we understand the mind, the soul. Jeremiah made this statement respecting the deceitfulness of man, to show the folly of trusting in him, and to persuade people to trust in God. Therefore, he says—'Cursed be the man, who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.' Then he adds—'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search

* Psal. li. 5.

† It has been said that this was a proverbial expression among the Jews, used to denote a grievous offender. Thus they said to the man born blind—*Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* John ix. 34. See Priestley's notes.

‡ Jer. xvii. 9.

the hearts and try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways.' Now so deceitful is man in his best estate, that it is wrong to trust in him; we 'cannot fully know him; his warmest declarations of friendship may be deceitful; his acts of benevolence may be designed to gain our confidence, the more deeply to wound us; and with the best dispositions his strength is but weakness.' Surely then, we should not trust him when in his worst condition. Thus, if this language proves an inherent depravity existing in our moral nature, we must say that every being on earth is totally depraved; because all are deceitful for aught we know. Besides—to say 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' is not to say, man is totally depraved, incapable of doing any good, and natively corrupt.

Again—'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'* These words are often quoted to prove that man in his natural state cannot discern anything good, that he must be wrought upon by the spirit before he can form any idea of the Gospel. This is entirely wrong, for by natural man here is not intended man as he is by nature, but as he has been rendered by sin. The word natural signifies sensual, or animal, and is in one place rendered sensual. Speaking of wisdom from beneath, the Apostle says—It is 'earthly, *sensual*, (*natural*) devilish.'† In his sensual state, or the state to which he is brought by sin, man cannot perceive the Gospel; sin blinds the mind and perverts the judgment; but nothing is here said of any natural inability.‡

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † James iii. 15.

‡ Macknight renders it *animal*, and says, an animal man is one who makes the faculties of his animal nature, that is, his

Again—'If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.'* It will be sufficient to give Macknight's paraphrase of this. 'And if, as often as I disobey the law, I do that which reason and conscience incline not; by thus condemning these actions, I acknowledge the law to be good. Now, therefore, it is not reason and conscience which work out these evil actions, but they are wrought out by the sinful inclinations which prevail in my animal nature. These evil actions I justly ascribe to the prevalence of fleshly appetites: For I know that good is not predominant in me, that is, in my flesh. Indeed, to have an inclination to what is good is easy for me, or any whose conscience is not wholly seared; but to practise what is excellent I do not find easy.' This text, therefore, is far from proving total depravity. Indeed, the Apostle is speaking of the spiritual and the animal man; and showing that his delight in the law of God was after the inward man, but that temptation sprung from the flesh. If totally depraved, how could the inner man delight in the law of God; and how could he have the warfare of which he speaks?

Other passages have been quoted to prove total depravity; but they are so evidently misapplied that any remarks upon them are unnecessary.

senses, his passions, and his natural reason darkened by prejudices, the measure of truth and rule of his conduct, without paying any regard to the discoveries of revelation. See his Commentary.

* Rom. vii. 16—18.

We believe that sinners have a carnal mind, which is enmity against God; that we must all be born again to see the kingdom of God; that we need cleansing from the filthiness of the flesh; that sinners are in a lost state; but we find no necessity for referring this to any original depravity. There is nothing in the Scriptures which teaches that men are born *wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.*

II. Having shown this doctrine to be wholly without proof, we will now consider some of the arguments against it. Before adducing these, however, it may be well to define our views of the natural state of man. We believe—'*That man is by nature, that is, as he is born into the world, equally free from sin and destitute of holiness, no more inclined to vice than to virtue, and equally capable in the ordinary use of his faculties, and the common assistance afforded him, of either.*' With this definition before us, we can easily account for the prevalence of sin, in all ages and nations, without referring it to any original depravity.* Men have naturally capacities both for virtue and vice; and when more under the dominion of temptation than the restraints of virtue and religion, they will give themselves up to evil. And here we can account for the proneness of people to stray from duty. It implies no orignal depravity; but is to be wholly attributed to the influence of temptation. We are surrounded by evil; the world is constantly ministering to the appetites and passions; and while this influence is exerted over the animal nature, little or no influence is exerted over the spiritual. Reverse the case—sur-

* J. Wesley urges the prevalence of sin as an unanswerable proof of total depravity. This is his great argument, the chief pillar in his edifice. See vol. ix. of his works.

round man with spiritual influences, and withdraw his temptations, and he would not be thus prone to wander and give himself up to sin. But I must not enlarge here, and will, therefore, proceed to state some objections to the doctrine of total depravity.

1. It cannot be reconciled with the traits of early character, witnessed in all children. Whoever will look at children, will uniformly find, that they are naturally kind and affectionate. Even the infant, before it has learned to lisp the name *mother*, a name which awakens so many endearing associations, will show a strength of affection, and a degree of goodness, which must forever refute the idea of total depravity. How can the heart be wholly corrupt, which loves fervently, and is grateful for every favor? I know it has been said, in reply to this, that children are 'rebellious, disobedient, unkind, wrathful and revengeful.'* But this is no answer to the argument; for these qualities are not a general characteristic of children; on the contrary, children are generally the reverse of this. To set aside our argument, it must be shown that children have naturally dispositions entirely evil; that all they do is evil, and all they desire evil; and that there is nothing in them to be loved or admired. Those who undertake this labor, are requested at the same time, to show the meaning of the Savior when he says—'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven;' and explain how they can be totally depraved, when they 'have some qualities, which are essential to those, who are to become christians.' Should it be said—children do not love God, and, therefore, they are naturally averse from him; I answer, they cannot love him of

* Dwight's Theology, vol. ii. p. 8.

whom they are ignorant. Acquaint them with God; place him in all his loveliness and excellency before their mind, and their hearts will be filled with reverence, gratitude and love; this will be as natural, as for them to have these feelings towards an earthly parent.

2. The convictions of our hearts teach that we are not totally depraved. Every man knows that he can judge between right and wrong, good and evil. His certainty of this, makes him feel condemned when he has done wrong, so that he is harassed with the reproaches of a guilty conscience. But if, when the sinner chose evil, he had felt utterly unable to choose good, could his conscience afterwards reproach him for doing what it was impossible to avoid? 'Are the agonies of remorse the least mitigated by any consciousness of inability to do what we knew was right? According to this system, the inability existed, nay, was absolutely invincible. Conscience then, is a stupendous lie. Remorse is a wanton, unjust, unmerited cruelty. The whole moral nature of man is one vast system of barbarous deception. Man is made wretched by a feeling of liberty which he does not possess. He is just as miserable as though the cause of his wrong doing were in himself; whereas it was in Adam thousands of years ago. But who is the author of this moral nature? God. By whose arrangement is it that we have this consciousness of power and feeling of remorse? God's. Then it follows that millions of the human race are undergoing the torments of remorse, for that for which they are not at all to blame, by the ordination of God. Does not every principle of reason, and every sentiment of piety revolt from such a supposition?'

3. What we daily witness in society disproves this doctrine. Whoever will look around upon

the human family, will find even among the worst and most abandoned of our race, many excellent traits of character. Go to the land of heathen darkness, where a false and pernicious religion has for centuries exerted its cursed and degrading influence, and you will find much to admire. A modern traveller in Burmah says—'Whenever we stopped to eat, we entered a house freely, and were immediately offered clean mats, and treated with the utmost hospitality. Able and willing to supply our wants, they sometimes expostulated with the servant as he was cooking our meals, that he had brought rice and fowls, instead of allowing them to furnish our tables. This trait is prevalent among the Karens. Native assistants go from village to village among them, even where the Gospel has never been heard, and take literally neither scrip nor purse. They are bountifully supplied even where their message meets only with opposition.'* Now the people exhibiting such traits of character cannot be totally depraved. Indeed, look where you will; 'search the history of man; all the records of human guilt and crime, and you will not find one instance of a life of pure and unmixed evil. There never lived the man, all of whose actions, words, thoughts, desires and affections were wrong and sinful from his cradle to the grave. Even in the most corrupt and abandoned of men, there is something to approve, some good thoughts and worthy dispositions, some feelings of kindness and humanity. The moral edifice is, indeed, in ruins; but its scattered fragments tell of its former grandeur and beauty.' Now while such is the case, it avails nothing to point, as the advocates of total depravity do, to the warlike passions of man; to his

* Rev. Howard Malcom's Travels, vol. i. p. 57.

revengeful feelings, his unrelenting cruelty, his deep deception, and to the universal prevalence of evil; let them show that one man, in all the human family, is totally corrupt, and they will do something towards proving their views. It is not enough to prove that men do wrong; it must be proved that they do only wrong; for according to our views of man, he is liable to sin.

4. The success which attends the cause of religious instruction disproves the idea of total depravity. Education, it has been said, is to the human mind, what sculpture is to the marble. And we may say, what education is to the mind, religious culture is to the heart. But does the sculptor create those qualities in the marble, which give it its beauty and worth, or does he simply develope them? Does education create intellectual powers, or improve and develope those already in existence? Can education avail anything with one who has no mind? If not, religious culture would be entirely fruitless, providing there be nothing good in the human heart. Christianity does not create moral faculties in man. Its great office is to redeem them from error, bring them under a right influence, and seek their development. Hence the Bible speaks of polishing the heart after the similitude of a palace; making children grow up in virtue like plants of the field; and training them up in the way they should go. It speaks of teaching them the fear of the Lord, which shows that a religious character is formed by education. In perfect accordance with this idea, are those parables in which the effect of the Gospel is represented by that of leaven; and the heart is compared to the earth which receives the seed and brings forth its fruit. All this language is unmeaning, if man does not naturally possess faculties which

are capable of religious impressions and improvement, the same as the mind is capable of improvement by education. And I would ask, if these are not the views of all who advocate total depravity? If not, why all their efforts to teach religion to their children? Why their various books of religious instruction, adapted to the minds of the young? Why their Sabbath Schools? Why their deep anxiety to train up their children for God? Would they make all these exertions, if they thought the heart could not be benefited by religious culture?

5. The commands of the Bible disprove the doctrine under consideration. God commands us to love him with all the soul, and our neighbor as we love ourselves. This command is binding upon all men. Now is God just or unjust, reasonable or unreasonable? I answer, more unjust than Pharoah, if he commands beings totally depraved to love him and each other; for they have no more power to obey than the blind to see, or the dumb to speak. But this is not all the injustice. He not only commands sinners to perform impossibilities; but according to this system, threatens them with endless damnation if they do not obey. He is like a father who plucks out the eyes of his son, and then because he cannot see, tortures him in every way his ingenuity and cruelty can devise! Can such be the character of God! Does the Bible declare him thus infinitely cruel and unjust? Can we receive a book as divine, which holds forth such horrid sentiments? Thus the doctrine dishonors religion, dishonors God, and leads the reflecting to doubt the divine authority of the Bible. Consequently, we must believe that every man is born into the world with the same capacities which Adam had, that he has the power of being virtuous or vicious. Unless such be the

case he has no agency whatever, and is not accountable for his actions. I know it has been said—'We are not to infer from the commands of God, that man has any power of observing them; that conditional promises do not imply that man has the free power of doing that upon which the promise is suspended, and God is not chargeable with mocking our impotence, when he invites us to deserve his favor, though he knows our utter inability to do it.'* But all who can subscribe to such sentiments, must believe that might makes right; and that divine justice would be the worst of cruelty and injustice in man; he must sanction the barbarous usages of kings in those times called the 'iron and ferocious ages;' he must say that right in God is wrong in man; that divine justice is at variance with human; and that men will be endlessly damned for imitating God.

Man, then, is not a being of mere corruption; he bears the image of his Maker; he is a partaker of the divine nature. Consequently, he cannot urge the natural corruption of his heart as a reason for his disobedience; the fault is with himself; it consists in abusing his powers, neglecting his opportunities, and despising his means of improvement. He is guilty, because able to refrain from sin, and obey his Maker. He can give to God the affections of his heart, and do as he would be done by. He can be temperate in all things; just in his dealings, and faithful in every relation he sustains. God promises to reward all who do these things, and threatens with punishment all who do not. Therefore, man is not born depraved; but born with capacities for dealing justly, loivng mercy, and walking humbly.

* John Calvin.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIVINE LAW.

The word law is variously used in the Bible. In some instances, it denotes the whole revealed will of God. Thus the prophet says—'To the law and the testimony,' meaning to the Bible. It denotes also, the dispensation of Moses. Thus the Apostle says—He that despised Moses' law, died without the least mitigation of punishment; he suffered the full penalty. Law is, in some instances, used to signify the rites of the Jewish religion. Thus we read of the yearly sacrifices of the law, which were only a shadow of good things to come. The more general use of this term, is to denote that rule of action, which God has given for the government of all mankind. God is the moral Governor of the world; and in all cases he governs by laws. Hence the means employed to promulgate his law and its penalty. To this law the Savior refers, when he declares, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and that heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law. On this hang all the commands of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. To have a full knowledge of this law, we must understand both its requisition, and its penalty.

I. What does it require? The Savior answers —'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love

thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'* I shall say nothing here of the ability of man to love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself; for I have proved this in the preceding chapter. Besides, a law always presupposes an ability on the part of its subjects to obey. The only question is, whether the law will be fulfilled; whether all men will ever possess this love. There are many reasons for answering this in the affirmative.

1. The design of the Lawgiver is not defeated by transgression. We may illustrate this by referring to St. Paul. He lived in the open violation of this law, till the moment of his conversion; but had his sin defeated the design of the Lawgiver, he could not have been converted, and must have remained in endless hostility to God. This remark will apply to all christians. Once they were in sin—in rebellion against the law; but the very fact that they have been redeemed from that state proves that God was not defeated in his design. Indeed, laws imply that transgressions will occur; they are not made for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedient; they are designed to overcome evil, and bring the heart into final submission to the divine will. Hence God in his first promise says—'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'† Here the reign of evil is contemplated; it shall even crucify the Savior; but still its reign is to be limited; for Jesus shall bruise the serpent's head, or destroy the very cause of all sin. It avails nothing, therefore, to say, the law will not be fulfilled for men are sinful; because God foresaw that they would be sinful; and

* Matt. xxii. 37—40. † Gen. iii. 15.

he gave the law, not to prevent sin wholly, but finally to destroy it. Hence a temporary resistance of the law is not defeating its design.

2. The demand of the law is unchangeable. This is a self-evident proposition. God is unchangeable. So are all the principles of his moral government. Therefore, his law cannot require love at one time, and hatred at another. We may argue this also, from his holiness. God cannot look upon moral evil with the least degree of approbation; sin in all its forms is an abomination to him. Would he then so change his law as to demand hatred instead of love? 'The consideration of the essential justice or rectitude of God, that principle which leads to an unchangeable respect to what is right and equitably fit, leads to the same conclusion. God has his own rights, as maker, and, therefore, as proprietor and lord of all creatures; and it is fit they should be maintained and vindicated. To surrender, or unsteadily and uncertainly to assert them, would be an encouragement to evil, and his very regard to mere abstract right and moral fitness must, therefore, be considered as determining God to a steady and unchangeable assertion of his rights, since their surrender could present no end worthy of his character, or consistent with his holiness.' It is God's right to be loved and obeyed; and, therefore, should he alter the demand of his law, he would surrender his right. We may infer the same from the goodness of God. It desires the supreme happiness of all. Desiring this, it demanded their love; and therefore, to change the demand would be to require the supreme misery of all. The Scriptures confirm this reasoning. They call upon all men to love God with all their soul, and their neighbor as themselves. This is the uniform command of God. We see it on almost every

page of the Bible. It matters not how hardened we may be in sin, or how long we may have followed the path of iniquity, the law is still binding upon us. Indeed, were it to change, sin would cease to be sin; hatred would become a virtue, because in accordance with the law. On this principle, if any are doomed to hell, they will be just as obedient as the saints in heaven, unless they turn and love God in opposition to his law. Thus the demand of the law is unchangeable; and therefore, love will finally fill all hearts.

3. The declaration of the Apostle, that 'love is the fulfilling of the law,' sustains this position. It shows that a law requiring love, can only be fulfilled by love. We ask, therefore, if the law be not obligatory upon every man? This will be conceded by all. Then if it be fulfilled, and love only can fulfil it, must not every human being be redeemed from hatred, and filled with all the fulness of love? To doom some to interminable misery would be no fulfilment of the law; on the contrary, it would be an eternal violation of it, and defeat the design of the Lawgiver.

4. The new covenant proves the correctness of our views. 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.'* Now how can a law of love be put in the mind, written in the heart, so that all shall know the Lord, and all sin taken away, without having all hearts filled with love?

* Heb. viii. 10—12; Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

5. The language of the Savior is equally explicit and positive on this subject. 'Think not,' he says, 'that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'* Thus to make all men love God and each other was the sole design of Christ's mission; love is the sum of all goodness and all happiness. Wherever this prevails, all is harmony; for all is in unison with the divine will and law. Do you ask for more proof than is found in the design of the Savior's mission? Then read his promise—*Till heaven and earth shall pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* Can the Savior deceive? In *no wise*—on no account shall this fail of being done. Who then can doubt that the period will arrive, when all hearts shall beat in unison with the divine law, and love reign triumphant throughout the empire of God?

Such is the law, and such its fulfilment. We will, therefore, proceed to consider,

II. The penalty of the law. The views already advanced will aid us in coming to a correct conclusion on this point; for if we are right in regard to its demand and fulfilment, it is certain that the penalty of the law is only a limited punishment. I am well aware of the common opinion. I know it is generally believed that, in transgressing the law, we commit an infinite sin, and that we deserve an infinite punishment; and consequently that the penalty of the law is endless pain. But there are many objections to this view of the subject.

1. The law cannot have two demands in direct

* Matt. v. 17. 18.

opposition to each other. We have seen that it demands the supreme love of all men. This demand is unchangeable; nothing the sinner can do has power to change or destroy it. Hence it is impossible that the law should demand endless misery, because that is directly opposed to supreme love. No man believes that we can love God supremely, and yet suffer infinite torture.

2. Why should God annex a penalty to his law, which would forever prevent its fulfilment? Why not annex a penalty calculated to accomplish rather than defeat its design? Endless misery cuts off all possibility of reformation, or of loving God; it makes the sinner endlessly rebellious against his Maker. A limited punishment would be different; this would be perfectly consistent with the original requisition of the law; it would even be instrumental in bringing the law to bear upon the heart of the sinner, and in giving it efficiency and power.

3. Endless punishment is a greater evil than it is designed to prevent. What is sin with all its consequences, even in those countries where the gospel is unknown, compared with endless misery? In the worst state of human society there are many redeeming circumstances; many virtues and sources of enjoyment. But in the place called hell, there is not a single virtue or source of happiness. One soul there endures more than all the evil that results from human action; so that the remedy is infinitely worse than the evil it is designed to cure. Hence the idea that God threatened endless misery, in consequence of his universal rectitude and benevolence, or that he might maintain his government, and preserve some from ruin, is unsound; for really, it does not produce so much obedience as disobedience, so much virtue as vice, happiness as misery.

4. Sin cannot be infinite. It is usually argued that sin is infinite, because the violation of God's law. But to be infinite in consequence of this, it must annul the law, and defeat the great design for which it was given. But can man defeat God? Can he annul the law of the Almighty? The Scriptures answer, As God has thought so shall it come to pass, and as he has purposed so shall it stand. Besides, we have seen that sin does not defeat the design of the Lawgiver. Therefore, it is only a finite evil.

This argument is sometimes stated thus. Sin takes its magnitude from the greatness of the being sinned against; and, therefore, it is infinite. But this proves all sins of equal magnitude; and yet the world has always gone upon the principle, that there are degrees in sin. We talk about great sins, and small sins; we punish some slightly, and some severely. Our laws are all formed upon this supposition; and our courts of justice recognize this in every sentence they pass. And the Scriptures say—Every man shall be punished *according* to his deeds, which surely implies that the deeds of some are worse than the deeds of others. They speak too, of great and small sinners. Paul styles himself the chief of sinners. The servant which knew his Master's will and did it not, was more guilty than he who sinned ignorantly. To whom much is given, of him much is required. Thus there are degrees in sin; and if so, all the sins of an individual cannot make one infinite sin. Neither can all the sins of the universe, if combined together. We are certainly right, for the Scriptures teach that sin is measured, not by the greatness of the being sinned against, but by the knowledge of the sinner. Thus the sin against the Holy Ghost was greater than that against the Son of Man; not, however, because the Holy Ghost was

greater than the Son; but because this sin was denying the miracles which were wrought by the Spirit, and which were the most convincing proof that could be given that the gospel was from God. Can man have infinite knowledge? If not, sin is finite.

This agrees with the scriptural representations of sin. The Apostle says—'Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. But how could this be, if sin were infinite? What can exceed infinity? 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' But if sin be infinite, how can it be removed? What power in the universe is able to take it away? Two opposing powers of equal strength annul each other; and if sin be infinite, it is equal to grace; and therefore, can forever annul the operations of grace. Thus sin is finite, and cannot, therefore, deserve an infinite punishment.

5. The penalty of the law is a limited punishment. To be satisfied of this we have only to observe, that endless death is no where affixed to the law. God did not say to Adam, on the day thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die an endless death. Let it not be replied this is the import of the penalty, because if such be the case, the serpent was right in saying, Adam would not die; for he lived many hundred years after; and then went to heaven, if the common opinion respecting his final doom be correct. The Apostle does not say, the wages of sin is endless death. Indeed, the phrase endless death does not occur in the Bible. But why is this? In those works advocating the doctrine of interminable wo, we meet with nothing more frequently. *Endless death—eternal death* are standard expressions in them. But if the words *die* and *death* mean the same, why use end-

less and eternal; if not, why do the inspired writers say nothing of endless or eternal death?

I know it has been said, that death, whether natural or moral, is in its own nature, endless, because the negation of life, the absence of that to which it stands opposed; and that as death cannot produce life, it will hold on to its subjects with an eternal grasp, unless God revoke his law, and extend pardon.* This reasoning assumes that, in moral death, there is an entire absence of all virtue, that every moral faculty is entirely dead, the same as every function of the body is totally inert, in a state of natural death. But is such the fact? If so, man has no power to recover from moral death. But we have seen that no man is totally depraved; and consequently when the Scriptures speak of moral death, they do not mean that all moral life is gone. This is certain from the fact that the morally dead are commanded to arise and come forth to life. Thus—'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' Now if moral death were the extinguishment of all moral life, the same as natural death is the extinguishment of all natural life, wherein would be the propriety of such a command? We should not think God reasonable, were he to call upon the natural dead to awake. But why not as well call upon them as upon the morally dead, if the latter are as destitute of moral as the former of natural power? Moral death, then, is not in its nature endless; and has not power to hold on to its subject with an endless grasp; for all the moral powers are never extinguished. Every man, with the help of the means of grace, has power to turn from sin; to go from death unto life. Thus, it is the penalty of the law, that just as long as we continue sinful, we shall continue in a state of moral death, that evil

* Lee against Universalism.

will follow every infringement of God's law, and that the only way to escape the evil is to turn from sin. Hence God says—'If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Moral death, then, is not entire depravity; consequently, the penalty of the law is not endless death.

It has been argued that death is endless, because set in contrast with eternal life. *The wages of sin is death.* 'Death,' says Barnes, 'stands opposed here to eternal life, and proves that one is just as enduring as the other.'* Why, then, did not the Apostle say—*eternal death?* Why leave the reader to infer this, when the soul's infinite welfare was in danger? But does it follow that because death and life are contrasted, that one must be just as enduring as the other? If so, must they not be the reverse in all things? Must not one be just as extensive as the other; just as great; just as efficacious? And if so, how could man receive the wages of sin, and still be an heir to the free gift? God is just, and man cannot escape punishment. The wages of sin are fully dealt out to all. This is certain from the meaning of the word wages. Dr. Clarke says, 'The word which we here render wages signified the daily pay of a Roman soldier. So every sinner has a daily pay, and this pay is death; he has misery because he sins. Sin constitutes hell: the sinner has a hell in his own bosom; all is confusion and disorder where God does not reign; every indulgence of sinful passions increases the disorder, and consequently the misery of the sinner.' Nothing could be more correct than this description of death.

* Barnes on Rom. vi. 23.

The wages of sin is the daily pay of the sinner; so that he can receive for all his transgressions, and yet be saved by grace. But this could not be, if the wages were endless death. Then all who suffer this, must lose life eternal; and all who have life, must escape from the demands of the law; whereas the Apostle teaches that every man shall suffer the wages of sin; these are his daily pay; while the servant of sin, he has the fruit of sin.* The fact, therefore, that death is contrasted with eternal life is no proof that the penalty of the law is endless death.†

'Wages is the just reward, or stipulated compensation for services rendered. Gift, on the contrary, is something unmerited, a boon of unpurchased favor. Thes two words are, therefore, beautifully contrasted here. But he who should attempt to prove from this contrast, that the gift of God is to

* Rom. vi. 16—22.

† 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Here it will be perceived are three pairs of antithetic terms. 1. Wages is contrasted with gift. 2. Sin is contrasted with God. 3. Death is contrasted with eternal life. In the last case Mr. Barnes says that 'eternal life stands in contrast with death, and shows its meaning—it is opposed to death and proves incontestibly that that means eternal death—there could not be a stronger proof that the word death refers not to temporal death, but to eternal punishment.' Let us apply this reasoning to the other antithetical terms which are before us. Sin, it may be observed, is 'here spoken of as a person,' as a tyrannical king, or cruel master, and is contrasted with God, the supreme and gracious Ruler of the universe. Now since God stands opposed to sin we are enabled to determine its meaning. One is just as long in duration, and just as great as the other. But since we know God is infinite and eternal, this manifest antithesis proves incontestibly that sin is so likewise. There could not be a stronger proof of the fact. This, it must be confessed, is rather a startling conclusion, but I hope our interpreters of antithesis will not complain. *Rev. T. J. Sawyer, on the penalty of sin.*

be measured by the wages of sin, or that they are precisely equal to each other, obviously undertakes a hopeless task, and one too, which, should he succeed, would sink the power of the Almighty to do good to the level of human powers to do evil, or, what is equally derogatory to the dvine character, it would exalt man to an infinity which God exclusively claims. So in the second antithesis, sin is contrasted with God. The opposition lies in this, that sin is in its nature and influence unfriendly to the interests and happiness of man, while God is at once man's Father and best friend. God is holy: sin is the reverse. God is good and perfectly good, sin is evil and evil only. Here the contrast ends, and to suppose that because sin is opposed here to God, it must therefore, be equal to him, in all respects, would appear little short of insanity. Again: in the last antithesis death is opposed to eternal life; but the contrast here exists in the opposite natures of death and life; while the qualifying word eternal is introduced in connection with the latter, to show that 'the gift of God' surpasses indefinitely, perhaps I should say infinitely, 'the wages of sin.' It appears to me that the Apostle studied to express himself in this strongly antithetical passage in such a way that he could not easily be misunderstood. For this purpose all the terms in the first member of the sentence are taken in an obviously lower sense than those of the second; so that while in one point of view there is a striking antithesis, we see its effect greatly heightened by the almost infinite disparity which exists between the ideas of which it is composed. The objects contrasted are indeed opposite in their nature; but by no means equal in their extent or magnitude. On the one side stand sin, wages, death; on the other, God, gift, eternal life. To pretend that these terms are cor-

respondingly equal is more than I am willing to think any unprejudiced mind can do. Indeed the judgment must be sadly biased by a creed before such an idea could be for a moment indulged. And yet all this must be pretended and believed, or else this must be given up as furnishing no proof of the doctrine of endless misery.'* Thus the penalty of the law is not endless punishment; and, therefore, there is nothing in the penalty which teaches that the law will not be fulfilled, that every human being of the universe will not finally love God supremely. The penalty is for the good of all; it cuts off none from divine favor; but aims to bring all into obedience to God, to turn them away from sin, and fill them with all the fruits of the spirit. Every law must have a penalty, or it is a dead letter; but a penalty which defeats the design of the law, is worse than none. Consequently a law requiring love of all men, and which can only be fulfilled by love, can only require a punishment calculated to reform the offender, and restrain from sin.

According to this reasoning, Christ does not fulfil the law, by enduring its penalty in the place of the sinner. Neither is it necessary to the sinner's salvation, that any one should suffer as a substitute; for no man is under sentence of endless condemnation. Every man must suffer in his own person all that the law threatens; and for Jesus to take the place of the sinner would be doing him the highest disservice. God's government is righteous and perfect; and to annul any of its laws, or interrupt any of its operations, would be acting against divine wisdom and goodness. There is only one way in which the law can be fulfilled; and that is, by being written upon every heart. Sup-

* Rev. T. J. Sawyer's Sermon on the penalty of sin.

pose the law requires endless death, and Christ endures that death; this will not prove the fulfilment of the law in a single soul; all men may notwithstanding remain eternally under the dominion of hatred. The Scriptures expressly declare that the law can only be fulfilled by love. 'He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' 'The law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.' And yet, we are told that suffering fulfils it! that Christ has magnified and made it honorable, by dying in the place of the sinner!! But if this be correct, to fulfil the law, is distinct from making men love God supremely. Indeed, Christ may fulfil the law; and still punish millions of our race with endless hatred, wrath and revenge!!

But we need not enlarge. The law requires love of all men; and nothing but love can fulfil its demands. It has penalties, and inflicts punishments; but they are to amend the sinner, and render him obedient to God. This law Christ will fulfil, not by suffering as a substitute, or executing infinite punishment; but by making all men love God. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or one tittle of this law.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE ATONEMENT.

The christian church is divided into two classes in regard to the atonement. One class believe that Jesus by his labors, sufferings and death, redeems us from sin, as the physician redeems his patient by the aid of medicine. The other class believe, that by his death, Jesus satisfies the demand of justice, placates the wrath of God, and suffers as a substitute for the sinner. This opinion is thus defined—'Atonement is the satisfying of divine justice by Jesus Christ giving himself a ransom for us, undergoing the penalty due to our sins, and thereby releasing us from the punishment which God might justly inflict upon us.' In the thirty-ninth article of the church of England, we read—'Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us. The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual.' In the Westminster Confession, it is said—'The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given him.'

The process of reasoning by which this doctrine is defended, is as follows—God governs by a wise and righteous law, the penalty of which is endless

death. All men have broken this law, and deserve its penalty. God being just, and filled with wrath at man's disobedience, will not extend pardon, till the penalty is fully endured. Men cannot endure it, and still be saved; therefore, Jesus steps forth, and dies as a substitute; and thus secures the sinner from God's avenging justice, and reconciles the Father to us.* From this, it will be seen, the doctrine rests upon the assumption, that the penalty of the law is endless misery; that all men are under this penalty, and that salvation is a redemption from it. But all this we have disproved in the previous chapter, where we have demonstrated that no other punishment is threatened except what is calculated to reform the sinner, and aid in fulfilling the law, which requires supreme love of all men. Hence Christ does not die as a substitute, to release us from the punishment due to our sins; for none are under sentence of endless condemnation; and divine justice demands nothing at variance with our good. Thus this system has no foundation;—it rests entirely upon a false assumption. Nor is this all. By examining its different parts, we shall find, that the system is entirely wrong; that all its essential parts are erroneous.

1. It gives a wrong view of divine justice. 'The justice of God is that perfection whereby he is infinitely righteous and just, both in himself and in all hisproceedings with his creatures;' or that 'unerring and eternal principle of right by which he rewards and punishes every man according to his deserts.' Nothing is more distinctly taught in the Bible, than that every man must suffer for his own sins, that God will by no means clear the guilty. In no passage is it said, the innocent shall suffer for the guilty. On the contrary, we read—'He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth

* See Lee against Universalism, and Watson's Institutes.

the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.' How then can he punish Christ for the sins of man? Justice not only requires that punishment shall be equal to the crime; but that it shall be inflicted upon the criminal himself. We should pronounce the judge cruelly unjust, who should condemn an innocent man for the offence of a guilty one. This would be violating every principle of justice, and defeating the end it was designed to accomplish. Justice restrains and reforms the sinner by its enactments and punishments. But how can it do this, if all its strokes are to be inflicted upon the innocent? What effect will its penalty have, if the offender believes there is a sure way of escape? But vicarious atonement says, We can all escape the entire penalty of the law; that there is a way in which we can revel in all sin, and not suffer a single blow from the rod of justice!! I know it is thought that by inflicting upon Christ the penalty of the law, justice gains its end, because God maintains his authority as the supreme Governor of the world. But this is mistaking entirely the nature of justice; and saying, that because its laws have been violated, it must inflict a punishment corresponding in degree to the guilt of the offender, though it is immaterial upon whom the punishment is inflicted. No error could be greater than this. Justice never required the punishment of the innocent; and, therefore, the sufferings of the innocent cannot answer its demands. It is as much the office of justice to hold the offender accountable, as it is to execute its penalties. God inflicts punishment, not simply because his authority has been resisted and his majesty despised, but because this punishment is essential to the sinner's good. Therefore, justice must dispense to every man equal rewards and punishments.

2. Vicarious atonement represents God as a changeable being. The creeds say, 'Jesus died to reconcile the Father to us.' I am aware that a different view has been advanced; and that vicarious atonement has been ascribed to the eternal and immutable goodness of God.* But if God really loves the sinner, why need his favor be propitiated? Why is an advocate required to plead the cause of the sinner before him? Why is God's anger spoken of as the great obstacle to man's salvation? Why is Christ uniformly represented as coming to quench the wrath of God? We ask, therefore, if God can change? Do not the Scriptures say: He is the Lord God that changeth not; that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; that he is without variation or the shadow of turning? Hence Christ can accomplish nothing, if he died to 'reconcile the Father to us;' for the Father changeth not.

But is God our enemy? Is he capable of wrath, revenge, or anger? To say this, is to ascribe to him human passions and frailties, make him unstable as the water, and fickle as the wind. Consequently, when the Scriptures speak of God's wrath, they mean 'nothing like human passion, and especially the passion of revenge;' but they mean the 'divine displeasure, or indignation against sin; the divine purpose to inflict punishment.'†

* See Dr. Wood's Letters to Unitarians. The concession he makes, is a virtual abandonment of a vicarious sacrifice. Besides, this concession is against the Trinitarian creed. Thus the Westminster Confession says: 'Jesus purchased reconciliation for us,' by which it is meant that he reconciled God. R. Watson, in his Institutes, says: 'The above passages will show how falsely it has been asserted that God is nowhere in Scripture said to be reconciled to us, and that they only declare that we are reconciled to God; but the fact is, that the very phrase of our being reconciled to God, imports the turning of his wrath from us.'

† Barnes' Notes on Romans, chap. 1.

This is consistent with the greatest possible love, mercy and grace. Hence while God is opposed to sin, he loves the sinner, and his tender mercies are over all his works. Indeed, the Scriptures nowhere style God our enemy. On the contrary, they 'confirm the information proclaimed by nature and the common dispensations of Providence, that God is as benevolent as he is powerful; as compassionate as he is just and wise.' We see in them the same doctrine we see in the sun which shines, and the rain which descends on the evil and unthankful; 'in the peace which returns to the mind in proportion to its return to God and duty; in the sentiment of compassion which springs up in the human heart towards the fallen and lost; and in the moral instinct which teaches us to cherish this compassion as a sacred principle, as an emanation of God's infinite love.' 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' Thus Jesus is not the cause of God's love; for it is eternal, unchangable, impartial and free; and, therefore, Christ did not come to turn away God's wrath, and shield us from his vengeance.

The system of vicarious atonement abounds with contradictions and absurdities. For instance, it represents the sinner as owing God an infinite debt, which he insists upon being paid; but the sinner is finite, and has no means of answering the demand. What shall be done? Shall the sinner be sacrificed? God cannot discharge the debt; for his law and authority have been dishonored, and

he must vindicate his claims as a righteous Governor. What plan does he adopt? According to this system, he pays the demand himself!!* Yes, God appeases his own wrath; and pours upon himself his own vengeance! A strange method this to vindicate his honor! How idle, how unnecessary does this make the atonement.

Perhaps it will be said, this objection is unfounded; for the second person in the trinity pays the demand to the first. But this only increases the difficulty; for if there be three Gods, they must all be equally offended, and the same reasoning that would prove an expiatory sacrifice demanded by one, would prove it demanded by the others. If there be three Gods, why should not atonement be made to them all? God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, must have the same reason for unreconciliation, which the Father has. According to this, three atonements are necessary; and if the Son makes atonement to the Father, why should not the Holy Ghost to the Son, and the Father to the Holy Ghost?

There is another difficulty. If the law demand endless suffering, how can it be satisfied by the death of Christ? Were his sufferings infinite? Did he endure, while upon the cross, as much as all men would, if they were to be endlessly miserable? If not, the law is not satisfied; for it goes on the principle of strict justice, of having all its demands answered to the letter. Here, then, we have vicarious atonement reduced to a single point. If the mighty Maker died, then we have an infinite satisfaction for an infinite sin; we have infinite pain endured, and justice satisfied. But no one believes that God did or could die; no one believes that Christ either suffered the quality or the quantity of misery, which the law threatens.

* See Ballou on the Atonement.

Professor Stuart says: 'If Christ died, then, as a substitute for sinners, it is not at all necessary to suppose that his sufferings were the same in *quality* and *quantity*, as would have been endured by those in whose room he suffered, in case the penalty of the law had been executed upon them. In fact, such a supposition is replete with difficulties of a kind not easily to be removed. The worm that never dies—the cup of wrath without mixture which is drunk by sinners in the world of woe—we have strong reasons for believing is the sting of a guilty conscience—self-condemnation and reproach for having violated the just and holy law of God. This sting the holy and spotless Savior never felt; this was an agony to which his bosom of perfect purity must have been a stranger. However high his sufferings mounted, they could not have been the same in *kind* as those of the wicked in the world of misery. Nor can we well conceive how they could have been the same in *quantity* as they deserved whom he redeems. He suffered but a few hours; or, if you include his whole period of humiliation, but a few years. In his divine nature, considered as the *immutable God*, we cannot conceive of his having suffered; and, indeed, the Scriptures always represent him as having assumed the *human* nature, in order that he might suffer. Phil. ii, 6—8; Heb. ii. 9. Great as his sufferings were, yet they were not like those of the damned,—sufferings of absolute and hopeless despair. He could look beyond them, when hanging on the cross. He did. He could see the glory and prosperity of his kingdom, as the certain result of them.' Thus we have no infinite atonement; all that suffered was the human nature of Christ; the 'infinite victim proves to be a frail man, and God's share in the sacrifice is a mere fiction.'

It avails nothing to say, 'God took into union

with himself our nature, that is, a human body and soul; and *these* bore the suffering for our sins; and through his union with these, God *may be said* to have borne it himself;' for it is only *our nature* that suffered. Neither will it remove the difficulty to say, what Christ suffered was accepted as an equivalent; for if anything short of infinite suffering was accepted, justice was not satisfied, the penalty of the law was not executed, and God extended pardon by mere prerogative. In this case, the atonement was wholly fictitious. Christ did not bear our iniquities; they were not laid on him; what he endured bore no more proportion to our deserts, than finite bears to infinite. Admit that his 'sufferings had respect to transactions of a civil or penal nature'; if anything short of the penalty was accepted, the whole scheme of vicarious atonement vanishes, and God could as well have accepted the sufferings of a mere man, as those of the human nature of a God. 'Christ's sufferings,' says Trinitarianism, 'were *accepted* as an equivalent, though they were not an equivalent.' But how does this vindicate God's honor, and maintain his authority? How does this prove that he will have strict justice?

There is still another difficulty. Christ, it is said, suffered the full demand of the law, or what God accepted as an equivalent. But if so, how can the penalty of endless death, be justly inflicted upon the sinner? Christ has paid the debt, and God, therefore, cannot demand its payment again. The creed says—He has made a full atonement for all sin, both original and actual. I know, it has been said, the curse of the law is not unconditionally cancelled;* but nothing could be more inconsistent; for the atonement is either made or not

* Rev. W. Fisk's Sermon on the curse of the Law.

made; and if made, justice is satisfied, and the curse of the law endured. Conditions, in such a case, are wholly precluded. Wherein then, is the consistency of threatening sinners with endless punishment, when Christ has suffered it for them? In what danger can they be of endless pain?

Thus we see, that the whole system of vicarious atonement is false. Christ does not come to reconcile the Father, for he is the eternal, unchanging Friend of man. He does not die to suffer infinite pain, for God has no such demand. The law has no penalty which can be revoked without infinite disservice to man. Atonement is not a legal transaction between the Son and Father, a settling of accounts with divine justice by paying our debts, a removal of the incumbrances which stopped the course of divine mercy, and rendering God propitious.* Christ could not make such an atonement; for infinity could not suffer. God could not die.

What then is atonement? We answer—*It is the reconciliation of man to God, through the mission of Jesus Christ.* Thus we read—'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprovable in his sight.' 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto him-

* Richard Wright.

self, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'* These passages declare in the most explicit manner, that the reconciliation is in man. God is right, but man wrong; God is holy, but man unholy; God loves the sinner, but the sinner is at enmity with God. The reconciliation, therefore, is altogether in man. The plan of reconciling the world originated with him. *God so loved the world that he sent his Son to save it.* The means for executing the plan are all furnished by the Father. *All things are of God, who hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.* How can such expressions as the following be reconciled with the idea that God receives the atonement! 'Reconcile all things unto himself;' 'reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;' 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;' 'we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' 'we have received the atonement.' In accomplishing this work of reconciliation, Christ is said to be doing the Father's will; executing the Father's purpose; fulfilling the Father's promise. He is never spoken of as being full of mercy, pity, love and grace, while the Father is burning with anger, rage and revenge. On the contrary, he is said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; the messenger of his grace, love and mercy. He is never said to save from God's wrath, but from sin, ignorance and error.

* Col. i. 19—23; 2 Cor. v. 18—21.

This view of atonement corresponds with the various terms employed to represent the work of Christ. Thus he is represented as *seeking* the lost; going after the wandering; *saving* the sinful; teaching the ignorant; purifying the unclean; and slaying the enmity of the heart. All his labors are directed to the improvement of man; and nothing in his preaching, miracles or sufferings, is designed to placate the wrath of God, or produce the least change whatever in the divine mind. Thus man receives the atonement.

This view of our subject will be confirmed by considering that the doctrine of vicarious atonement is opposed to the scriptural representation of righteousness. The righteousness required in the Scriptures is personal, and consists in obedience to God. 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' Thus it has its 'foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience.' It is conformity to the divine law; it is justice and holiness; it is following peace with all men. This we gather from all the instructions of the Savior. Blessed, says he, are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers; for they shall see God, and be called the children of God. 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.' 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' The virtues which gave the christians a place on his right hand, when he sat in judgment upon the Jewish nation, were personal virtues; they were feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and the afflicted. Hence he says—Except *your righteousness* exceed that of the scribes, &c. But why say—*your righteousness*, if

it were not personal? St. Peter speaks of *working righteousness*, and gaining by it acceptance with God. Thus righteousness consists in love to God and Christ; in charity, forgiveness and beneficence.

But vicarious atonement denies that righteousness is personal, and maintains, that though a man, through faith, conform to the divine law, he is not a christian, unless the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. It denounces personal virtue as utterly worthless. Now how can I receive a system, which thus contradicts the general language of the Bible; which condemns what God uniformly declares as of the highest possible worth? Besides, it is utterly impossible that the righteousness of one being should be transferred to another; because righteousness has no existence separate from the state of the affections. It is not like water which can be conveyed from one vessel to another; but it is the right exercise of our moral faculties. Hence the only way in which Christ can render us righteous, is, by rectifying our moral nature—rendering us obedient to God. Thus atonement is reconciliation.

Again—Vicarious atonement contradicts the scriptural doctrine of justification. According to the Scriptures, men are justified just in proportion to their personal goodness, and condemned just in proportion to their personal vice. To be satisfied of this, we have only to consider the ways in which we are said to be justified. 1. St. James says—'Ye see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.' By works here, moral goodness is intended, or conformity to the divine law. 2. St. Paul says,—'Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.'* How does faith justify?

* By *deeds of the law*, St. Paul does not mean what St. James calls *works*. If he did, there would be a contradiction

Let the Scriptures answer. It 'works by love and purifies the heart.' Thus it justifies by the obedience it produces, the works to which it leads. 3. We are said to be justified by Christ. Thus—'Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' This is explained by St. Peter, who says—'Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham. And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' This language fully explains the method of justification. Men are justified when turned from iniquity; and when through the mission of Jesus, all men shall have been turned from iniquity, all will be justified, or in a state of conformity to the divine law. Hence we read—'Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' Here *justification* is synonymous with the phrase *made righteous*, which clear-

between them. By deeds of the law he means the ceremonial observances of the Jewish law—these had no power to justify. The occasion which gave rise to this language was St. Peter's dissimulation at Antioch, where he at first neglected the Mosaic ordinances, but afterwards observed them through fear of some Jewish christians. To this St. Paul says—'If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.'

ly proves that all men will be justified by being rendered holy, by being purified by the gospel.*

This reasoning is confirmed by the fact that men are never justified except through the operation of truth upon their hearts. 'The doers of the law shall be justified;' 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;' 'and whom he justified them he also glorified;' 'ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;' 'the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.' Such is the general voice of the New Testament. But vicarious atonement teaches a doctrine directly opposed to this. It teaches that men were absolved, by the death of Christ, from the

* In the same way men are rendered sinners by Adam. Adam was the first sinner, and thus sin entered the world through him; his offence was the beginning of the reign of sin. Thus Barnes says—'The Apostle here is evidently not discussing the doctrine of *original sin*, but he is stating a simple fact intelligible to all: The first man violated the law of God, and in this way sin was introduced among men. See his Notes on Rom. Professor Stuart says—'Sin entered the world [commenced] by the offence of Adam.' On the phrase Death passed upon all men *for that all have sinned*—he says —We cannot render this as some have done—*In whom all have sinned;* for that is a wrong translation. He gives the meaning thus—'All men have sinned in their own persons; all men have themselves incurred the guilt of sin, and so subjected themselves to its penalty.' See his Com. on Rom. It is certain that the Apostle here contradicts the idea, that we suffer on account of Adam's sin; because he says—'For all have sinned'—that is, sinned in their own persons. This idea is confirmed by the declaration, that 'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.' Now if all sinned and fell in Adam, they had all sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; and yet the Apostle says—there were some who had not sinned thus. To sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression, was to transgress a revealed law. Those who lived from Adam to Moses, did not sin in this manner, because they had no revealed law.

penalty of the law, and justified before God, when they are ignorant of the whole transaction. Thus it is defined to be—'An act of God's free grace, in which he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.'* This system of justification gives a mistaken view of the operation of faith. The Westminster Confession says: 'Faith justifies the sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof were imputed to him for his justification, but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.' Here all the purifying influences of faith are thrown aside; and its great office is said to be—*to receive and apply Christ and his righteousness:* whereas, the Bible teaches, that it justifies because it purifies, and renders us obedient. Those who believe in imputed righteousness, fancy that there is a moment during their conversion, when they feel the curse of the law taken from their souls, and the righteousness of Christ applied. Before this, they can see themselves hanging over the place of perdition, suspended by a hair, just to be sundered by the drawn sword of justice. The instant they are ac-

* The idea of imputing, that is, transferring sin or righteousness from one being to another, is altogether absurd. To impute sin and righteousness, is to account or reckon them. Thus the Apostle says: 'Sin is not imputed, that is, reckoned, where there is no law.' He says also of Abraham: 'He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.' That is, Abraham's strong faith was regarded as an evidence that he was God's friend; and thus accounted to him for righteousness.

cepted, they see themselves safe, and fully justified before God; the whole curse is taken away, and they imagine themselves clothed with the righteousness of Christ.* But all this is erroneous. The Scriptures know nothing of such a justification, or such conversions. To be justified is to be rendered holy and conformable to God; and not to be absolved from the penalty of God's law.

Thus the system of vicarious atonement is not the system of the Bible. Every part of it is wrong. Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law—his office was entirely different. He came to fulfil the law by writing it upon all hearts. He did not die to render God propitious; for God loved us when we were sinners, and sent his Son to save us. In accomplishing this great work, the Son seeks our reconciliation, our purification; he labors to render us righteous and justify us, by giving us his own spirit and temper, and by turning us away from evil. Truly, then, can we say, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.'

We will close this chapter by considering a few of the scriptural arguments usually adduced in favor of vicarious atonement.

1. 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;' 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;' 'he shall bear their iniquities.'† In what sense is this language to be understood? We

* It may be asked, if righteousness is not imputed, why the Apostle describes the righteousness of the law as entirely defective? We answer: By the law he means the Mosaic law, the righteousness of which 'consisted either in ceremonial observances, or in the heartless performance of outward acts, which of course could avail nothing to justification.' While he rejected this as worthless, he insisted that the 'righteousness which the moral part of the law required, was to be attained only by the faith which purified the heart, or in other words, by the gospel which was the ministration of the spirit.'

† Isaiah liii. 4. 6. 11.

have seen that Christ neither suffered the *kind* nor the *quantity* of punishment deserved by the sinner; and, therefore, he did not bear our iniquities by having the punishment laid on him which our sins deserve. By turning to the New Testament we shall find this subject fully explained. 'When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.'* Thus in scripture language, Christ is said to bear our evils, when he removes them from us. In this sense, Christ bears the sins of the world; for he is the Lamb of God that taketh away all sin. Hence, when it says, 'He shall bear their iniquities,' it says also, 'that by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' This clearly shows, that he saves, that is, bears our iniquities, by the agency of his knowledge, or the action of his religion upon the heart.

2. 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'† This language is usually regarded as positive proof that Christ suffered the punishment due to our sins. But we would ask, if there is no other sense in which he could be wounded for our transgressions? Christ was a Savior; and in the work of salvation, he had to encounter error, bigotry and sin. Through these, he was opposed, persecuted and put to death; and thus, he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. But in all this suffering, we see not a single stroke of avenging justice; what

* Matt. viii. 16. 17. † Isaiah liii. 5.

he endures is incidental to the work of opposing error, bigotry and sin; he suffered as the Apostles and christian fathers suffered. Hence the New Testament speaks of our being partakers in the sufferings of Christ. But how could this be, if he suffered as a vicarious sacrifice; and we on account of the unholy opposition to truth and righteousness? This explains the language of Peter—'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.'* The object of this suffering is not to operate on God, to appease his wrath, but *to bring us to God.* Thus we are saved by the sufferings of Christ, because through these truth is promulgated, and we are reconciled to God.

3. 'There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.'† The word ransom, it is said, signifies primarily the price paid for the redemption of a slave; and, therefore, as Christ gave himself a ransom for sinners, it shows that his sufferings were a substitute for the punishment due to the wicked. But this is far from being the only sense in which *ransom* is used. It also signifies any means by which a deliverance is effected. Hence God is said to have ransomed the Israelites from Egypt—that is, he redeemed or delivered them from bondage; but no price was paid as in the ransom of a slave. Ransom simply signifies the means by which the deliverance is wrought. Thus when the Jewish people were brought back from Babylon, it was said, 'The Lord hath redeemed Jacob and ransomed Israel.' In this sense Christ gave himself a ransom for sinners—he died, not to satisfy God, but to restore sinners from their evil ways. The terms

* 1 Peter iii. 18. † 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6.

buy and *bought* are used in the same sense. Hence, when it is said, 'Ye are bought with a price,'* it means that Jesus gave himself for the redemption of the world, just as the revolutionary fathers gave themselves to effect the freedom of our country. Unless we are right, to whom was the ransom paid? Not to satan, as some of the fathers believed; for he held the sinner in unlawful bondage; and surely not to God, for it would impute to him the character of a slaveholder. The price then, with which we are bought, is those labors and sufferings by which we are redeemed.†

4. 'And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'‡

* 1 Cor. vi. 20. † 1 John ii. 1.

† The word atonement occurs but once in the New Testament, and then according to Clarke and Barnes signifies, not a vicarious sacrifice, but our reconciliation to God. 'It frequently occurs in the Old Testament, and in every place it means the efficacy which God was pleased to give to particular ceremonial observances in removing legal impurities and uncleanness from men, and in making the sanctuary, the altar, the vessels, &c. legally pure and holy. Atonement was made as well for the altar, the vessels, &c. as for sinners. If we choose to apply this term to christianity, it must mean the efficacy of the measures which God, by Jesus Christ, has been pleased to appoint to purge the consciences of men from dead works, that they may through Jesus Christ be justified in his sight. Atonement, in a scriptural sense, cannot mean merit transferred from Christ to the sinner, by which he is justified; but an effect produced in the disposition of the sinner himself, which renders him the fit object of the mercy of God. Christ is said 'to be the propitiation for our sins.' He was the medium of the gracious provision which assures pardon to the repenting sinner, and eternal life to the obedient christian. He is said 'to have given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God.' In the execution of the gracious and merciful purpose of God in the salvation of sinners, he consecrated his days, and sacrificed his life.—'He was the good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep.' In imitation of his piety and devotedness to the appointed duties of his mediatorial office, we are directed, as his disciples, to present ourselves a living sacrifice unto God, holy, and acceptable in his sight.'

These words are supposed to teach that Christ advocates our cause before God, just as an advocate in court pleads the cause of his client. But in what light does this present the character of God? Can we believe that the 'God of all grace,' of everlasting mercy and infinite compassion, whose very nature is love, needs any one to plead with him, and advocate our cause before him? Can we admit, for a moment, that the Son has more love, pity and compassion, than the Father? The text says—'Christ is an advocate *with* the Father,' which shows, that instead of pleading our cause before God, he will, as the Father does, plead with us, and seek our redemption, if we fall into sin. This is the general sense of the word rendered advocate.*

5. 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'† 'To propitiate is to reconcile or to make overtures of peace. Hence propitiation is a reconciling sacrifice. Propitiatory is something adopted to reconcile, or intended for that purpose—something on which,

* Its proper meaning, says Barnes, is to *call one to us.* It is used five times in the New Testament; and in four instances is applied to the Holy Spirit. John xiv. 16. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 17. In the other instance, it is applied to Christ. Barnes thus describes the office of the Holy Spirit. '1st. To comfort them; to be with them in his absence, and to supply his place: and this is properly expressed by the word. 2d. To teach them, or remind them of truth: and this might be expressed by the word monitor, or teacher (v. 26: xv. 26. 27.) 3d. To aid them in their work; to advocate their cause, or to assist them in advocating the cause of religion in the world, and in bringing sinners to repentance. And this may be expressed by the word advocate (ch. xvi. 7—13.) It was also by the Spirit that they were enabled to stand before kings and magistrates, and boldly speak in the name of Jesus.' Barnes on St. John, chap. 14. Now is it reasonable to suppose that when John applied this word (*Paraclete*) to Christ, he used it in a different sense? Does not Christ *comfort, teach* and *aid* man?

† 1 John ii. 2.

from which, in which, by which, or through which overtures of peace are made. Hence the Apostle represents Christ as 'set forth' as a propitiatory or mercy-seat, in, from, or through which, God might manifest his righteous and merciful disposition towards men, by doing what love could do to reconcile sinners to himself—and to cleanse them from their sins. If we read the passage under review with such a meaning to the word propitiatory or propitiation, how little is seen in it of avenging justice! Indeed what do we behold in it but unmingled displays of reconciliating and forgiving love? It will perhaps be said, that the advocates for vicarious punishment admit that propitiation means a reconciliating sacrifice. This may be true; but they attach to that meaning the 'wrath of God,' endured by Christ as our substitute —which, in my opinion, no more belongs to the word propitiation, than it does to the word mercy, or mercy-seat. What has wrath or avenging justice to do with making pacific overtures, or reconciling sacrifices?'*

6. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'† This law, it has been said, is none other than the moral law of God, that universal rule of righteousness, which is binding on all men in all ages of the world.‡

* N. Worcester on the Atonement. † Gal. iii. 13.

‡ Rev. W. Fisk's Sermon on the curse of the law. The position which he here assumes, and on which his whole theory rests, he sustains by only *one* passage of Scripture! He brings no other to his aid. But has truth no greater resources? Surely the ground work of a system ought to be proved with the greatest possible clearness. Besides, his application of the text is refuted by orthodox commentators. Thus Rosenmuller says—'No Jew is able to yield perfect obedience to all the precepts of the Mosaic law; he is always in danger, lest he should offend: all the Jews therefore, being aliens from faith in Christ, are obnoxious to punishment. It is written,

But to see the error of this we have only to consider, that the Apostle is speaking of the ceremonial law. 'For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.'* Now as he here speaks of the works of the law, a common phrase for its forms and ceremonies; of the book of the law, and of the things written therein, there can be no doubt of his referring to the Mosaic law. Perhaps it will be said, 'the moral law must be intended, because the law here spoken of is as extensive as the redemption itself.' But such is not the case. Christ hath redeemed *us* from the curse of the law. He is writing to Galatians, who were converts from Judaism. By us then, he means Jewish converts, and not Gentile. The Apostle says not a word of the Gentiles being redeemed from the curse of the law. The redemption therefore, is not as extensive as the blessing. Should it be asked, how the blessing came on the Gentiles, by Jews being redeemed from the curse of the law, I answer, they becoming converts, carried the gospel to the Gentiles? Was not Paul styled the Apostle of the Gentiles! And was not Peter instructed to preach to them

&c. Deut. xxvii. 26, cursed, unhappy, miserable. Who remaineth not, &c.; who shall not be continually perfect: The law here and in what follows, signifies the Mosaic law. By the curse is to be understood, those punishments, which are denounced in the book of Moses—corporeal, civil, public, private, &c. Nothing is here said of damnation, i. e. eternal punishment.—*Scholia in loc.*

* Gal. iii. 10. 11. 12.

by a vision from heaven? In this way then, did redeeming Jews from the curse of the law, cause the blessing of Abraham to come on the Gentiles. Converted Jews bore to them the glad tidings of redemption. It will avail nothing to reply, the moral law must have been intended, for it says, Christ was made a curse for us; because to be made a curse for us is not to answer the demands of the law in our stead. The Apostle says Christ was made a curse for us, because it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Here then is the reason, and not because he suffered a punishment in our stead.

Thus atonement is not satisfaction to God or expiation by penal suffering. God is our friend, our infinite, unchanging and eternal friend. And atonement is that system of divine grace, by which God works out our redemption from all iniquity. To this great end every thing in the scheme of mercy is directed. Why is the character of our heavenly Father laid before us in all its excellency, glory and beauty? Why is so much said of his love, and grace, goodness and compassion? Why does the Savior come to plead with, exhort and entreat us? Why does he invite us to the arms of bleeding mercy, pitying love, and forgiving grace? Why his toil and sufferings? Why his cheerful submission to the persecutions of the wicked, the scorn of the proud, and the agonies of the cross? Why were the Apostles sent forth to toil with their Master's zeal, disinterestedness and perseverance? It was all for our reconciliation—to redeem us from the slavery and bondage of sin—to make us a people zealous of good works, to fill us with all the fruits of the spirit, and clothe us with those virtues, which are a garment of unsullied beauty. Everything in the gospel is calling us away from sin to God, and inviting us

to holiness and duty. Our heavenly Father wears a smile of infinite compassion. Our Savior is enrobed in salvation; and the way to Zion is filled with all that is enchanting and delightful.

> Come, says Jesus' sacred voice,
> Come and make my path your choice ;
> I will guide you to your home,
> Weary pilgrim, hither come.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

Those who regard Christ as the supreme God, and believe that he died to answer the demands of justice, imagine, that a denial of these doctrines, is rejecting Christ, or at least, taking from his character all that is worthy our love and confidence, and all that qualifies him to be a Savior. This impression renders it necessary that we should state distinctly our views of Christ, and of his agency in the great work of redemption. Besides, the prevalence of the opinion that Christ's religion has no connection with his character, renders this labor highly important. Many who reject the deity of Christ, and the doctrine of vicarious atonement, are saying, it is immaterial what we think of him; if we only believe in the moral truths he taught, it is enough. Such seem to place but little reliance upon the testimony of his historians, respecting his character, wisdom, power and works. 'We have,' say they, 'the plain moral injunctions of the New Testament. They approve themselves to our feelings. Why should we trouble ourselves about points on which there has always been so much disagreement, and which present so many difficulties?'* Now we have no sympathy with these views. Take out the Savior from the New Testament, and its power and glory are gone. Its precepts,

* Christian Examiner, 1834, p. 278.

we know, are excellent, and fitted to every condition of life; but separated from the Savior, they are merely abstract rules, which can have but little efficacy.* Therefore, we cannot conceive of christianity disconnected with its Author. What then, is the character of Christ? And how does his character illustrate and enforce the principles of his religion? What is the connection between Christ, and our salvation? To answer these questions, we must consider Christ in his *divine*, *human* and *exalted* characters.

I. In speaking of his divine character, we shall not be understood to mean that he was God; for we have shown that he did not possess the attributes of Deity. By divine nature, we mean that which constitutes him the Son of God, his spiritual nature. In considering this, it may be well to contemplate,

1. His entire devotion to the work which his

* I cannot say—'Give me to know that the doctrine of Jesus is bread from heaven, and that it sustains the spirit, and prepares it for heaven; and I may well be indifferent whether that bread descended, like the manna in the desert, in nightly dew, or whether, like the food of Elijah, it was brought to my eager hands by the ravens, or whether it was broken, for myself and the hungry thousands around me, by a hand endued with miraculous power. So long as I know that it was sent me by the Father of my spirit, and that eating it I shall live forever, I know all that can give it value, or awaken my gratitude. When some friendly hand presses a cup of cold water to my lips, as I am fainting with thirst in a weary land, I will not ask, for I do not care, whether that water was showered from the skies, or whether it flowed in a river, or gushed from a spring. I ask not whether it was brought me in a golden urn, or whether it was presented in a crystal vase, or a soldier's helmet. It is water that bids me live, and that is enough for me.'—*Pierpont.* With me, the question, What is Christ? is all important. Religion derives its chief value from its connection with him; from its being exemplified by him; and the word of truth is a thousand times dearer from his lips, than from those of even an angel.

Father sent him to accomplish. Here we discover a fixed, unvarying purpose, one which no temptation could change, no obstacles discourage, no clamors intimidate. Neither the honors and glory of all the kingdoms of the world, nor the violence of the infuriated mob, could turn him aside from the work to which he was set apart. When questioned by his parents respecting the reason of his stopping in the temple, and disputing with the lawyers and doctors, he replied, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' On one occasion his followers thought to divert his attention, for a moment, from the great object of his mission; but his language was, *I have a work to do that the world knows not of.* In the concluding catastrophe of his life, he exclaimed, 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' Thus on no occasion did he lose sight of his Father's work. In the prosecution of this, he forgot himself, his own wants, feelings and comforts as a man; he performed *any* labor, endured any suffering, made any sacrifice—he went on amid perils and trials, amid reproach and persecution, till on the cross he exclaimed, *It is finished.* So entirely was he devoted to the work of his Father, that, in reading his history, we almost forget that he had any will, or wants, or feelings of his own. How different from man. He lives as though God had assigned him no work, as though placed here to labor for the gratification of his own selfish and ambitious feelings.

2. Jesus was in all cases governed by moral principle. There was no departure from this, any more than there is a change in the laws of nature. We see this in all the measures he employed in carrying forward his work. He never used deception; he never sought to move the multitude by groundless fears; he took no advantage of the

ignorance, prejudice or superstition of his age. Everything about him was as fair and open as the 'sun in his meridian course.' He made no resort to art or intrigue; he never said a holy end would justify unholy measures; but he relied in all cases upon the virtue and omnipotence of truth.

We see this unbending adherence to moral principle, in the way he endured persecution. It is impossible to conceive of a more unrighteous warfare, than was carried on against the Savior. Rumor, with her thousand tongues; bigotry, with her evil surmises; superstition, with her false charges, assailed him wherever he went. An unholy priesthood, a corrupt government, an unprincipled mob, persecuted him with untiring cruelty; and everything was done that falsehood, deception and cruelty could accomplish. But all this had no more effect in moving the Savior, and kindling within him the flame of wrath and vengeance, than the moth and rust of time, have an effect upon the pillars of the eternal throne. The same undeviating adherence to principle was manifested in the hour of danger, when death in its most cruel form was threatening him with its terrors. See Judas with his band of murderers going out with swords and staves to take him. Jesus beholds them and knows their murderous design; but while the world would cry, 'Fly, innocent sufferer, fly,' he goes with an unfaltering step to meet them.* We see the same unshrinking courage, when brought before Pilate and Herod; when scourged, to gratify the enraged multitude; when sentence of death was passed upon him, and when nailed to the cross. He knew, that though they could torture the flesh; that though they could suspend him between heaven and earth, as if unfit

* Corner Stone.

for either, they could not defeat the grand object of his mission, and that truth and righteousness would triumph. How different is this adherence to principle from man. To gain a desired object, he will adopt any means; to escape persecution, he will deny his God; and to avoid danger, he will denounce what he knows to be most sacred and holy. Thus, while the Savior sat in the calm, conscious dignity and firmness of principle, Peter denied, with oaths and curses, that he had ever known him.

3. Let us consider the love of Christ. In this he was pre-eminently the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Love characterized all the measures he employed in establishing his cause. If he taught the people, they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. If he performed a miracle, it was to give sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, life to the dead, or do some act of mercy. If he spoke of himself, it was of his being the chosen one of God, to show forth his infinite and everlasting love for a world dead in sin. He might have clothed himself in terror, and called to his aid the lightning and the thunder; he might have joined the popular cry, and preached the torments of an endless hell; he might have employed himself in alarming the fears of the multitude; he might have had recourse to the rack, the wheel, the gibbet and every instrument of torture which human ingenuity has invented; but as terror and cruelty could not implant love in the soul; as love only could beget love, he dwelt constantly upon the love, grace, mercy and compassion of God. These were the sun which he caused to shine upon the cold and benighted heart; the fountain from which streams of salvation gushed forth; the voice which called upon

sinners to return from their evil ways; and the hand stretched forth for their rescue. Thus he sought the redemption of man through love. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

4. Jesus was impartial. He lived in an age of the most narrow prejudices. The people among whom he was educated, regarded all but their own nation, as doomed to eternal wrath. But though subjected to this unholy influence, he rose up untainted by the foul spirit in which he lived, and appeared like a brilliant star on the bosom of surrounding darkness; he broke down the partition walls of his age, and invited the whole family of man to that fountain open for Judah and Jerusalem. His plan of grace was formed for the world. He knew no favorites; he aimed at nothing less than saving all, than baptising them afresh in the element of love. Hence we find him sending his apostles into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature. We see him inviting all, of every kindred, and color, and faith, to the arms of bleeding mercy; giving his life a ransom for all, and opening to all an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Such are some of the characteristics of his divine nature. But to give a full exhibition of these, and bring them to bear on the minds and hearts of the world, it was necessary that he should take upon himself human nature. This brings us to consider,

II. The humiliation or human nature of Christ. 'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled

himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' By *form of God*, the apostle means intellectual and moral likeness. But though thus like God, and fitted for the highest station, Jesus did not covet to appear great, but voluntarily took the lowest condition of man; and for the benefit of the race, endured poverty and persecution, even to the death of the cross. The wisdom and goodness of this will appear by considering,

1. That if Christ had not been a man, possessed of all the appetites and passions belonging to our nature, he could have made no manifestation to us of his higher nature, in a manner to be an example to us in all things. Imagine a being among us, incapable of want and suffering, possessed of all wisdom and goodness, and perfectly free from all incentive to evil; though we might admire his character, and though his perfections might beam upon us with ineffable brightness and glory, as he could never have endured adversity, resisted temptation, and overcome evil, he would be no example, and give no exemplification of the way in which we should live. So with Jesus. Disrobe him of his humanity, and leave him in the full possession of all the perfections of his divine nature, and you destroy the effect which those perfections have, as seen in his devotion to the work of his Father; his unchanging adherence to moral principle; his saving and forgiving love; and his great efforts in behalf of the race. We cannot form a correct idea of any moral virtue, till we see an exhibition of it in life. But men are imperfect, and from their actions, we gain but a faint conception of the sublime virtues of christianity. No one among all human beings has exhibited the perfections of Him, who from infancy to the time of his ascension, was free from evil. Indeed, such

a 'character is what no historian, mythologist, or philosopher has ever conceived. Here the whole world withdraws its pretensions. Every system of religion, and every school of philosophy stand back from the field, and leave Jesus Christ alone, the solitary example of perfect moral purity, in the midst of a world lying in sin.'

Who could ever have fully understood the nature of christian love, if it had not been manifested in Christ? By turning to him, we see, that it is loving every member of our race, whatever may be his country or creed, and however deep may be his depravity, or bitter his enmity against us; we see that all unkindness, hardness and revenge are wholly incompatible with this love. The prayer which he offered upon the cross, is a more lucid and impressive commentary upon his precept, *love your enemies*, than all that books could contain. These remarks will apply to all the virtues of christianity. Had they never been exhibited in the life of Jesus; had he never forgiven injuries, and sacrificed even life itself for the welfare of his enemies, we could have but an imperfect idea of that spirit which can never grow weary in forgiving, and that benevolence which is stronger than death. Thus Jesus is the living representation of all that he requires; and, therefore, his character is the best commentary upon his precepts. When you know how the Savior lived, you will know what he requires; you will understand every dark and doubtful saying of his moral code.

His character illustrates with the same clearness all the doctrines he taught. He said much respecting the Deity—his wisdom, love, power, justice and goodness. This however was not enough, for every man might attach to these terms whatever his fancy should dictate. It was

therefore, necessary that Jesus should exhibit in his own life, 'those moral perfections which belong to the invisible God;' and that too, amidst 'trials, joys, pains, sorrows, such as all' have; for without this we could not arrive at a knowledge of the divine attributes. 'Could we imagine ourselves shut out from all knowledge of the *works* of God, and were we then told that he was wise and powerful, how inadequate would be the ideas that we should attach to the words wisdom and power as applied to the Deity. Mere words could not convey these ideas. But let our eyes be couched, so that we might look abroad on the glories of the universe, and learn that the Being, who unfolds the leaves of the flower which opens its unnoticed beauty by the side of a forest stream, is the same who set the firm pillars of the earth, and kindled the undying flame of the sun, and established the everlasting circle of the stars, and the words wisdom and power have a meaning to them. The greatness of God is in some measure revealed. That is, we learn the wisdom and power of God, by seeing them manifested through works of wisdom and power. For the same reason, constituted as we are, the only way, in which we can arrive at any just notions of the character of God, is by seeing it revealed through character. Therefore it was in infinite condescension to our blindness, that God as it were stooped from his heavens, and humbled himself to our feeble comprehensions, and revealed his infinite glories in the softer light of the visible life of Jesus. Therefore it was, that he sent his Son into the world, not a mere prophet, but the image of himself.

'Dim and vague as our conceptions of the character of Deity are, we cannot but think that they owe very much of the distinctness, which they may have, to the fact, that we have seen his per-

fections displayed in the life of the Son of God. The more perfect our knowledge of Christ becomes, the more shall we understand the perfections of God. The more our love of the Savior enables us to appreciate his excellences, the more will the excellences of the Supreme be revealed to us. Thus we may see the important meaning of the truth, that by Christ we have access unto the Father.'*

Here then, we see, why Christ took upon himself human nature; it was that, amidst the snares and temptations of sin; the trials and discouragements of virtue; the pains and the afflictions of time, we might have a living commentary upon the whole christian scheme; an example which should make our way plain before us. No abstract doctrine or precept could do this. A divine book, without a divine person to exemplify its principles, would not have answered. Hence God 'manifested his will in the flesh. He revealed living truth in a living being. He raised up his holy child Jesus, made in all points as we are, that he might be intelligible to us; who became in his life, spent in the exercise of every virtue, a living moral revelation, the Voice, the Scripture, the Word of God.'

2. By taking the humblest station, he gained access to people in the lowest condition of life. He made himself one with those in poverty; one with those in trials and persecution; one with those borne down by the scoffs and oppressions of the proud, the haughty and the cruel; one with those, for whom the 'law had no protecting arm, justice no balances, and the religion of the country, no cup of consolation.' In this way, he demonstrated that impartial love, which brought

* Christian Examiner of 1839, p. 277, 278.

salvation to all, and showed that in the eye of God and grace, there was no difference between the rich and the poor. This he could not have done had he not made himself of no reputation. Suppose he had selected a state of wealth, rank and influence, and had philosophy argue in his defence; poetry sing his praise; eloquence plead his cause; and royalty clothe him with state and power, he could not have reached the poor, or awakened their sympathies in religion; he could have done nothing towards breathing the elevating spirit of his gospel into their hearts. How does this course of the Savior condemn that of many preachers. The poor are excluded from their ministrations. They cannot see one in humble circumstances, much less speak to him as a brother. They take the arm of the rich, and pass, in the spirit of pride and haughty disdain, all who have not titles and honors, wealth and distinction. Now would they forget the pride of wealth and rank, come down to the condition of the humblest, and address them as brethren, they would carry the gospel to the poor, and aid in lifting them from their degradation and misery; but as it is, they are as unfit for the ministry, as the proudest autocrat of the earth.

Here is a lesson worthy the attention of all nations. Many nations are borne down and staggering under the load with which they are burdened by the poor; and seemingly, the more they give, the worse does their condition become. Now were the example of the Savior pursued; would those of rank, and wealth, and distinction, so come down in their feelings and sympathies, as to take them by the hand, and treat them as brethren; would those who preach the gospel, show the same regard and love for the poor, they do for the rich, a nobler spirit would at once be breathed into

their souls; and they would put forth an arm for their own assistance. There is infinite meaning, therefore, in the language—'The poor have the gospel preached to them'—'He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor'—'He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.'

3. In humbling himself to the death of the cross, Christ gave the fullest exhibition of love which could be made. Here we shall see the great wisdom and goodness of the christian scheme. In order to gain the heart of a fellow being, we must first convince him of our love. It is utterly impossible to accomplish this in any other way. Fear and punishment may be useful; but it is only by checking a sinful career, and arousing the slumbering reflections. Love, after fear and punishment have done all they can, must melt the heart, and win the affections. Nothing but love can awaken love. 'We love God because he first loved us.' Hence, in the scheme of mercy, God chose a method, by which to give the greatest possible exhibition of love. Therefore, he sent his only begotten Son, the brightness of his own glory, and the express image of his person, to die for a world of sinners. Greater love hath no man than this, that he will lay down his life for his friends.* Yes, this was the brightest evidence of human love; and even this had but few practical exhibitions. 'A very few cases had occurred, like that of Damon and Pythias, where a man was willing to save the life of a friend by giving his own.' But Jesus died not for his friends; his love infinitely transcended all human love; *he* gave himself for his enemies, yea, even his murderers. Not only so—the death he endured was the most

* John xv. 13.

disgraceful, cruel, and agonizing which could be inflicted; it was a death of shame and protracted torture! 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!'

> 'O Lamb of God, was ever *pain*,
> Was ever LOVE like thine?'

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'* How important is the death of Christ! He died upon a cross that we might have a demonstration of infinite love! He died for all, for sinners, for enemies, that they might see and feel the boundless, changeless love of God! It is not surprising then, that Christ's death is so often mentioned in connection with our salvation; and that his blood is said to cleanse from all sin, What is so efficacious as love? What indeed but this can save and sanctify the heart? And how could this be fully exhibited without the shedding of blood?

4. By being made in the fashion of a man, and becoming obedient unto death, Jesus clothed his doctrine with a power which nothing else could give it. His object was to exhibit in the fullest manner possible the evils of sin and the excellences of virtue; and, therefore, he chose a method by which to endure all that sin could inflict; and while enduring this to manifest a love, forgiveness and mercy, which should display in the most perfect manner the excellences of his character, and the value of his religion. The wisdom of this method will appear by considering, that the misery which arises from the evil we cause to be inflicted upon the innocent, is much greater, more cutting and distracting, than that arising from any evil

* 1 John iv. 10.

we may endure ourselves. The unfaithful, intemperate husband and father is wretched beyond the power of language to express. But the sharpest arrow in his heart, the bitterest dreg in his cup, is not that he is an outcast, not that he is poor, loathsome and despised; but it is, that his wife is broken-hearted, his children are hungry and naked, poor and forsaken—that they have been made so by himself, by him who should have been their protector and friend.

This fact will enable us to see the infinite wisdom of the gospel. It was not enough that Christ should denounce a just punishment upon sinners, and say that sin is like a worm gnawing at the heart; like fire in the bosom; like a dart which strikes through the liver; like a millstone about the neck. All this had been done by moralists and philosophers before him; and had he done no more, his doctrine would have been armed with no superior efficacy. Hence he took upon him human nature; became our brother, and suffered the death of the cross, and thus endured, in his own innocent person, all that malice, hatred, cruelty and every species of iniquity could possibly inflict. Here we see the reason of his taking our nature, and not the nature of angels. Here too, we see the reason of the greatness of his sufferings, of his dying upon a cross. By bearing our sins in this way, by dying the just for the unjust, he awakened within us a deeper and more determined hatred of sin, a more thorough and lasting penitence, than would all the sufferings which God himself could inflict upon us; for in seeing that it was sin like that which burns, and rages and rankles in our souls, that inflicted these sufferings; that murdered the Lord of life and glory; that hung him upon the cross; that drove the rough nails through his hands and feet; that put upon his head the crown of

thorns, and gave him vinegar mingled with gall to drink, we behold its real nature, and the full extent of its malignity.

Who, I ask, can realize, that sin inflicted all this misery upon the innocent Jesus; and that while enduring the whole, he retained his love, mercy and compassion, and breathed forth his inimitable prayer, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,—and not hear a language from his bleeding hands and feet; his throbbing temples; his dying agony; his gushing side, which rings through every chamber of his heart, reaches the darkest recesses of his soul, and rolls back the whole tide of sinful feeling? Hence Christ and him crucified was the great theme of the Apostles. In the cross was an exhibition of all the bitterness, hatred, cruelty, deception and malignity of sin. Wherever it was set up, people saw, as with the eye of omniscience, all the haggard deformities of iniquity. In the same cross, they saw unsullied innocence, unwearying love, and undying pity, voluntarily giving itself a sacrifice for sin. Thus 'he was made to be sin, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;' that is, Christ was treated as a sinnner, that we might be converted to God. Hence such great efficacy is ascribed to the death of Christ. 'We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' he 'died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;' we are 'redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.' And hence we are said *to be bought* with a *price, or ransomed* by the *death* of Jesus. Take away his death, and the efficacy of the gospel is gone. True, it will be better than any system of philosophy ever promulgated, because its rules are perfect, and in all things adapted to the wants of man; but then all the power it derives from the example and sufferings of Jesus

will be taken away. Without the Savior, therefore, christianity is comparatively nothing.

Again.—The death of Christ clothed with efficacy his religion, by giving a pledge of the final destruction of all sin. While Jesus was dying for the unjust, there was a contest between sin and righteousness, hatred and love. His enemies put forth their strongest arm, and exerted their most malignant power. Had all the sin of the universe been collected together, and brought to bear at once upon him, his sufferings could have been no greater. Wickedness did its utmost, and went to the full extent of its power. But when its work was done; Jesus laid in the tomb; and its door fastened by a great rock; and the shouts of triumph were ringing through the whole kingdom of evil, he rose up from the dead as from sleep, and as he rose, the triumphs of iniquity died away; the strong foundations of sin crumbled; and the whole kingdom of darkness, with its walls, and bulwarks, and high towers, tumbled into ruin; and thus the folly and weakness and end of sin, were demonstrated to an astonished world. Now what can give his doctrine more power than this exhibition of the weakness, folly and end of sin, together with the eternity and immutability of righteousness? We see here that the Lord God omniponent reigneth, and that truth and virtue will infallibly triumph over error and sin.

5. By submitting to the cross, Jesus exhibited to the world the complete destruction of all death. It was not enough to show himself superior to all moral evil, and to rise in triumph over every power of darkness. The christian must go down to the grave in despair, unless the light of the resurrection dawns upon him. It is in vain to cling to righteousness in the hour of expiring mortality, unless it is to bloom, and flourish, and triumph for-

ever. The scheme of redemption, therefore, would be altogether incomplete without the resurrection. The pledge of this we have in the death and resurrection of Christ. He is the 'first fruits of them that slept;' and, therefore, he says, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' The death of Christ places the resurrection of man beyond all doubt. 'Now,' says the Apostle, 'if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.'* No argument could be more conclusive than this. That Christ had risen was an undisputed fact; and on this the Apostle rests his argument for the resurrection of the dead. He goes into no metaphysical discussion of the question. He has no human reasoning; no allusion to analogy. It was in vain, therefore, to ask how it could be, and seek to embarrass the subject by metaphysical subtilties. Paul had no concern with these matters. Jesus had risen after he had been dead three days; and if God could raise him, he could raise man; all the difficulties existing in the one case, existed in the other also. And hence if man will not rise, Christ did not; but if he rose, it is certain that man will.† Therefore, the Apostle says —'Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Christ has power over death. He has the keys of death and hell. The last enemy he will destroy is death. Death shall be swallowed up in victory. Such then is the connection which the death of Christ has with the gospel and our salvation. He is the resurec-

* 1 Cor. xv. 12—15. † See Barnes on 1 Cor. xv.

tion and the life.* He laid down his life that he might take it. Thus we have presented some of the reasons why Christ took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto the death of the cross. How great are the wonders of redemption! Truly may we say—'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' To his incarnation and death, christianity owes its chief worth, glory and power. With us Christ is all and in all. We yield to none in the importance we attach to his mission and death. We would be the last to say, Forget Christ; forget his incarnation, his holy example, his patient sufferings, his death of agony; only cling to

* The question has been asked, what is the use of Christ's death, if he did not die as a substitute for sinners. If any, after reading the foregoing on the reasons of his taking upon himself human nature, are still disposed to ask that question, we would answer, 1. His death was necessary to fulfil the Scriptures. His sufferings were all predicted. Hence the common remark, 'that it might be fulfilled,' &c. Luke xxiv. 44. 2. 'His death ratifies his covenant.' Matt. xxvi. 28. Heb. ix. 18—20. 3 'He died that he might be perfected through suffering.' Heb. ii. 10. 4 'He died to unite all men together in one family.' Eph. ii. 13—16. 5. 'He died to give us an example.' 1 Peter ii. 21. On each of the foregoing points, much might be said; but our limits will not allow us to enlarge. We cannot forego, however, introducing a word on Christ's self-sacrificing example. 'This it was,' says Rev. H. Ballou 2d. 'that kindled the same spirit in the Apostles; and their example, again, mingling its mighty force with that of the original, has been felt in all ages, whenever pain and danger were to be encountered in the cause of truth. Even in our own remote times, a voice is still heard from Calvary, from Gethsemane, from every scene that was hallowed by the sorrows of the Son of God, bidding the christian "be faithful even unto death;" and every note of exhortation to self-denial that is heard in the pulpit or private dwelling, is but an echo from that trumpet-tone, which has not yet spent itself, and never will. Take away, now, the sufferings of Christ, and where would christianity have been, centuries ago?'

his moral instructions, and you have enough. We can never put the Savior upon a level with Paul, or Peter, or John, or admit that he died simply as a martyr. Words are inadequate to express the high and holy purposes, which his death accomplished.'* That we are right in these views will be rendered certain by considering,

III. The exaltation of Christ. 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'† Thus his incarnation and death give him his power and dominion. Without these, the mere abstract doctrines and precepts of christianity, could accomplish comparatively nothing. It is these that render the word of God so quick and powerful; and cause the name of Christ to be above every name,—above kings, princes and lords. Jesus is exalted above all. Yes—he is above those proud and haughty monarchs to whom nations have bowed and begged for mercy; above those cruel and oppressive rulers, who have rode in triumph over their degraded vassals. All things are in subjection to him.‡ The hearts of the proud and rebellious are in his hand. Sin, death

* It may be well here to call up the idea refuted in chapter I. repecting the Four Gospels. 'The gospels are nothing; they are not to be relied on,' say some pretenders to the christian name; and therefore, we must learn christianity from the divinity within us. The divinity within? How much has that taught the heathen respecting those sublime truths exhibited in the life and sufferings of Christ? How much has it even taught them of the abstract precepts of christianity? And yet, these men would reject the gospels; and thus strike from existence all that Christ did, manifested and suffered during his incarnation!!

† Phil. ii. 9—11. ‡ Heb. ii. 8.

and hell are subject to his command. There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*. In bringing all men unto glory, it pleased God to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.† O risen and exalted Redeemer! how bright the lustre of thy name! how resplendent the glory in which thou art encircled! Such reader, is our Redeemer! Can we then separate him from his religion? Can we conceive the worth and meaning of the gospel, without his life and sufferings as a commentary upon it? Could his truth regenerate the heart without the power it borrows from his character and death? Is there any other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we can be saved? He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.‡

* Daniel vii. 14. † Heb. ii. 11. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

NOTHING is more distinctly taught in the Bible, than that some are elected to certain peculiar privileges. The words elect, elected, election, chose, and chosen, are of very frequent occurrence. 'I endure all things for the elect's sake;' 'the election hath obtained it;' 'you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.' The question, therefore, to be discussed in this chapter, is, what is the scripture doctrine of election? There can be no fairer way of answering this, than by referring to the cases of election mentioned in the Bible. On considering these, let us keep in mind the fact, that the elect are chosen, not for their own good exclusively, but also for the good of the non-elect; that they are instruments in the divine hand, to aid in accomplishing the designs of grace and love.

1. The prophets speak of Jesus as the elect of God. 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth.' But for what was this election made? Was it merely to exalt and honor Christ? Let the prophet answer. After having spoken of Jesus as the elect, he says—'I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the

earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.'* Thus he was chosen for the good of the world, to establish justice among men, and write his law in all hearts.

2. The twelve apostles were elected. Jesus says—'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go out into all the world, and bring forth fruit.'† Here the very language which speaks of their election, teaches that they were chosen as preachers of the everlasting gospel, that sinners might be converted, and the light of truth shed abroad among the nations of the earth.

3 Christians are called the elect. 'But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' 'If possible deceive the very elect.' They were not however chosen to enjoy the grace of God, to the exclusion of others. The very duties imposed upon them proves this. 'Let your light,' says Jesus, 'so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The truth they had received made them debtors to the world, and the only way in which they could discharge the debt was by carrying salvation to sinners, imparting the knowledge of God to those who sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death.

From these cases we see that the scriptural doctrine of election may be very happily illustrated by our republican government. In this government men are chosen to fill important and responsible offices. They are chosen, however, not for their own good alone, but for the general good. If a government is to be administered, there must be men appointed to administer it. Hence provision is made for the election of officers, and days for election are set apart. We may also draw an

* Isaiah xlii. 1—4. † John xv. 16.

illustration from our churches and religious societies. In these, pastors, deacons, and committees are elected to watch over the interests of religion, and attend to those duties connected with its prosperity. It is the same in the cases of election mentioned in the Bible. God wished to reveal his truth, and establish his religion in the earth. To accomplish this, he must choose men to promulgate his will, and carry on his work. Hence the appointment of Moses to be a lawgiver, and a redeemer to Israel. Hence the warnings and instructions of the prophets; the example, ministry and death of Jesus; the labors and sufferings of the apostles. Thus the elect are chosen for the good of the non-elect.

Here we might dismiss this subject, were it not for the prevalence of a system which teaches that the elect were chosen for their own eternal good, and the non-elect were doomed to endless pain. This doctrine is thus stated in the Westminster Confession. 'By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predisposed unto everlasting life, and others preordained to everlasting death. Neither are any others redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only; the rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.' This creed goes still further, and says, that this disposition of mankind was made 'without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto.'

Such was Calvinism in its original form. Of late it has been somewhat modified. This modifica-

tion consists in saying, none are predestined to endless death, but a part are left to their own will, while the other part are elected to salvation, and made sure of heaven. This, at first view, seems quite plausible; but when carefully examined, and considered in connection with doctrines that are inseparable from the system, it is no better than Calvinism in its old form. To be satisfied of this, you have only to reflect, that according to this system, man comes into the world totally depraved, incapable of desiring the least possible good, or of being converted, except by the irresistible agency of God's spirit. God has determined that he will only regenerate a part, and will leave the rest to follow their own inclination, or in other words, to the dictates of a nature totally corrupt, and which necessarily compels them to sin. Thus they are, to all intents reprobated, for the determination of God to withhold his converting influence, amounts to a positive reprobation, and renders it as certain that they will be damned, as though God had specially decreed it. The modification of Calvinism, therefore, 'only shows the embarrassments in which the friends of the doctrine are involved, when they would reconcile it with the attributes of Deity, and the common sense of mankind.'*

* The following statements of the doctrine are worthy of consideration. 'It teaches that God selects from the corrupt mass of men a number to be saved, and that they are plucked by an irresistible agency from the common ruin, whilst the rest are commanded, under the penalty of aggravated woe, to make a change in their characters which their natural corruption places beyond their power, and are also promised pardon on conditions, which necessarily avail them nothing unless they are favored with a special operation of God's grace, which he is predetermined to withhold.' Wesley says, 'The sum of all is this:—one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can.'

The principal arguments in support of this doctrine, are drawn from the following texts:*—'For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'† 'For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth; therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.'‡ 'Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'‖

* There are a few texts where the word reprobate occurs, which are thought to prove the doctrine. See Romans i. 8; 2 Timothy iii. 8; Titus i. 16; 2 Corinthians xiii. 5. 6. 7. Words often become greatly perverted from their original meaning by being associated with false doctrines. Hence, the word reprobate, which signifies *disapproved, rejected, cast away*, is thought to signify one doomed to endless pain by a divine decree. Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul speaks of his becoming a castaway or reprobate, unless he kept his body under. This is opposed to the common idea of the word, for according to that, it means one from eternity reprobated to hell, whereas Paul was not a reprobate, but might become one unless he kept his passions in subjection to reason and religion. Of the Gentiles, it is said, they were given over to a reprobate mind—given *over*—not *decreed* to it. Reprobate was originally applied to any metal which would not endure the trial, or when tried, would betray itself to be adulterate, or of coarse alloy. Thus sinners are indeed reprobates.

† Rom. ix. 11—13. ‡ Rom. ix. 17. 18. ‖ Rom. xi. 5—7.

In the examination of these texts, it may be well to ask, whether they teach reprobation to endless death. That they set forth, in the most distinct manner, a Divine Sovereignty, we shall not deny. The expressions, 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand;' 'he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth,' place this beyond all dispute. The sovereignty of God is implied in the questions, 'Is there unrighteousness with God?' 'Shall the thing say to him who formed it, why hast thou made me thus?'* But in admitting this sovereignty, we by no means admit that some are destined by a divine decree for endless wo. The object of its exercise, was not the ruin of a part, but the final good of all. Look at the case of Jacob and Esau. This has entire reference to this world. If not, how shall we understand the expression—*the elder shall serve the younger?* In the time of Malachi the unthankful Jews demanded of God wherein he had loved them. In reply, God said, 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.'† Here we see in what respect Esau served Jacob; we see also in what respect one was loved and the other hated; it was in their national character, and not in their person; for in person Esau never served Jacob. Besides, the words hated and loved‡ are not used with reference to the final condition of Jacob and Esau; but to the particular stations they were to fill in life. God's love for Jacob was

* Rom. ix. 14. 20. † Malachi i. 2. 3.

‡ When, says Professor Stuart, the Hebrews compared a stronger affection with a weaker one, they called the first *love*, and the other hatred. Compare Gen. xxix. 30. 31. Deut. xxi. 15. Prov. xiii. 24. Matt. vi. 24. Luke xiv. 26. compare with Matt. xi. 37.

simply his preference for him to be the head of the Jewish nation; and his hatred of Esau was simply a less love, regarding him not so suitable for the station to which Jacob was appointed.*

The case of Pharaoh is equally plain with the foregoing. God raised him up that he might show his power in him. But where was this power to be displayed? If in eternity, the case may favor the idea that God's power is to be shown forth by punishing Pharaoh in hell. Unfortunately, however, for the argument, Pharaoh was to be the instrument of showing God's power in this world. Thus it says—'*And that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*' This was done. The dealings of God with this proud and obdurate ruler, were the wonder of the world, and caused it to say —'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?'†

In the election and reprobation of the Jews, we find nothing to support the doctrine in question. They were once the chosen people of God. This however simply means that they were chosen to be the depositaries of his revelation, and the people among whom his miracles should be performed. In this sense they were the elect. Hence the Apostle says—'What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'‡ Now if the election were for endless life, how could the elect be blinded? We must be right, because their blindness is not to be endless. Thus—'I say then have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid.'

* 'That the whole refers to the bestowment of temporal blessings, and the withholding of them, is clear not only from this passage, but from comparing Gen. xxv. 23; xxvii. 27—29. 37—40.' Stuart on Rom.

† Exod. xv. 11.

‡ Rom. xi. 7.

Not only so, the non-elect could become the elect. 'And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.' The Apostle goes still further, and shows that God had a wise and gracious design in all this. 'For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.'* There was then, no partiality here; God was working for the good of all; and the result is to be the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. He will have mercy upon all.

It has been said, that this system of election is open to all the objections which can be urged against the common view of the subject;† for 'he that is unjust in the least, is unjust in much.' But how is any injustice done? The plan of God embraces the highest interests of all; and surely it is doing no injustice, if in the accomplishment of that plan, he enlightens one before he does another. Would a parent be unjust to his children, if in the accomplishment of a plan embracing their greatest good, he should find it necessary to keep a part ignorant for a while respecting his intentions? Keep in view the fact, therefore, that every thing is to be overruled for good, and none can accuse God of injustice, or complain of his making

* Rom. xi. 29—32.
† Professor Stuart in his Com. on Rom. ix.

some for temporary dishonor and destruction. Such a sovereignty is consistent with perfect goodness and love. If the dishonor and destruction, which are decreed, are succeeded by honor and glory, and are made the means of happiness, all is right, and no injustice is done, so that none can reply against God, or accuse him of unrighteousness, or say why hast thou made me thus?

This view of election will be confirmed by considering,

1. That God is *no respecter of persons.** To see the full import of this language, suppose a father has two children, one of which he feeds and clothes; the other he neglects; treats him with coldness and indifference; allows him to grow up in ignorance; and then punishes him for what he has thus brought upon him—would you not call him a respecter of persons? Then a respecter of persons is one, who is partial in his dealings—who shows favor to some and treats others with neglect. Hence according to Calvinism, God is a respecter of persons, for he elects some to life everlasting, and leaves others to perish in endless wo. Say if you please, with the advocates of Calvinism, that he has a perfect right to do this—say too with them, that he does the wicked no injustice; that they deserve the fate they meet; and still, he is a respecter of persons—he saves some and leaves others to perish. Thus Calvinism contradicts the Bible.

2. The Bible teaches that the Lord is good to all; and that his tender mercies are over all his works.† Suppose I should say, I am acquainted with a most excellent father—one remarkably kind, and perfectly impartial—Suppose in describing his character, I should say, He has ten

* Acts x. 35. † Psal. cxlv. 9.

children, four of whom he treats with great tenderness, and the other six he torments in every way he can devise. He has plucked out their eyes, cut off their limbs, and maimed them in every possible manner; and then, because they cannot do all things as though their sight and limbs were good, he loads them with chains, and throws them into a dungeon—would you not say, I was either trifling, or else insane? And yet, we are told that God is good, that he is love, mercy, grace, compassion, when he has doomed millions and millions to endless pain; when he has driven them to sin by an arbitrary decree, and by the same decree drives them down to the regions of endless wo!! O God! how has error tarnished thy glory!

3. Reprobation to endless death is opposed to the righteousness of God. Perhaps the reader will say—'Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?' But we are not replying against God; we are simply replying to those unnatural sentiments, which have been ascribed to him. And we say, it is inconsistent with the righteousness of God, to elect one being to endless life, and reprobate another to endless death. To act righteously is to act consistently with love, mercy and justice. Men act unrighteously, when they injure each other, and when they refuse to aid those in distress. When a parent punishes his child unreasonably and unjustly, he acts unrighteously. It is the same when a man sees another in difficulty, but refues to assist him, and leaves him to perish, when he has the means of his salvation. Our natures, our mutual dependence, and the laws of God, require that we should help the needy. Suppose a sea captain, in returning to his port,

should pass a crew of men clinging to the wreck of a vessel, from which they were liable every moment to be swept by the dashing waves. Suppose they call for help; tell him that they are feeble, hungry, thirsty and almost exhausted, and of the wives, children and parents that are waiting their arrival. Suppose too, they are almost within sight of home, and that he can relieve them without any difficulty or danger; should we not say the man who would pass them under such circumstances was worse than a savage, and that he deserved the execration of every righteous heart? And yet, it is said, God, who has all wisdom and power; to whom all nations are as a drop of the bucket, and the small dust of the balance; and who taketh up the isles as a very little thing; and the resources of whose bounty and fulness are inexhaustible; who can give without impoverishing, and work without growing weary, will pass by millions of the human race, and leave them to perish, when he could save them with the same ease that he could create the feeblest insect! Do not say God is a sovereign, and has a right to do as he pleases with his own; for power can justify none in being cruel, or in neglecting to do good as they have opportunity.

4. A decree of reprobation is opposed to the design of Christ's death. He 'gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.'* 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the sufferings of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.'† Now would God send his Son to die for those he had ordained to endless death? Would he invite sinners to himself, and urge them to accept his invitations when

* 1 Tim. ii. 6. † Heb. ii. 9.

he had rendered it utterly impossible for them to come? Suppose a king should load a subject with chains; confine him with bars and bolts in a prison; and then tell him if he would walk out, he should be promoted to honor; if not, he should be doomed to slavery, should we not pronounce him cruel and unjust? But is not God's decree of reprobation worse than these fetters and bolts? And still he invites sinners to come, and promises them life and peace, if they will hearken to his call; and all this, when he has rendered it impossible for them to come! Is it too much to say—This is sporting with the misery of man, and making a mock of his wretchedness?

5. A decree of reprobation destroys man's accountability. If from all eternity a certain portion were doomed to wo, how are they to blame for not being saved? They have no power to change the divine decree—no power to repent—no power to believe in Jesus—wherein then is their blame? And in what is to consist the final misery of such? It cannot be in horror of conscience, in regret for despising God's mercy; for their fate was decreed from eternity; and they were obliged to pursue the course they did. But if so, how can they be endlessly miserable, unless they are consigned to a place of literal fire? But none now believe in such a hell. Besides—What is the use of the warnings of the Bible? They can effect no change; every sinner must follow the dictates of his corrupt nature. Perhaps, it will be said—Sinners are warned, that they may have no excuse.* But does this leave them without excuse? Does it not make their excuse infinitely greater? If God has decreed I shall never repent, and then offers me salvation, and warns me of danger, he

* See Hopkins' Divinity.

enhances my excuse, and aggravates my misery; for notwithstanding all his offers and warnings, I am compelled to go in the way of sin.

Such are some of the objections which may be urged against this doctrine. For myself, I can no more believe it, than I can believe in the old doctrine of fate. It has not the show of reason. God is not a hard master; not an unreasonable governor. He has not, therefore, bound any by a cruel decree to sin; for he calls upon all to turn from their evil ways. His voice is, 'Turn ye, O turn ye, at my reproof, and behold I will pour out my spirit unto you.' God's law is not arbitrary and unjust; it requires only what we have power to perform. Do not, therefore, seek to excuse and justify your disobedience, by saying, you have no power to obey or perform your duty. You have power. God knows you have power; and your own souls teach that you have power. To argue against the consciousness of this, is like arguing against the sun.

CHAPTER X.

CONDITIONAL SALVATION.

THE words save, saved, and salvation are variously used in the Bible. In some cases, they denote the rescue of the body from temporal dangers; in others our rescue from moral evils; and in others the exaltation of man to heaven. When Christ says, 'He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved,'* he refers to salvation from the judgments by which Jerusalem should be overthrown. When the apostle says, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,† he refers to spiritual salvation. When it is said, 'the grace of God which hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world,'‡ eternal salvation is signified. Indeed, two salvations are here set forth; that which is the gift of grace, and that which is produced in the mind by so rich a gift. When, therefore, we read of conditional salvation, we must inquire, what is the salvation intended? Is it from physical evils, from moral evils, or is it endless glory in heaven? The scriptures have much to say of conditional salvation. We can hardly read a

* Matt. xxiv. 13. The end here spoken of, is the end of the trials of the christians, and which were to last till the close of the Jewish dispensation.

† Rom. i. 16. ‡ Titus ii. 11. 12.

chapter without meeting it. 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;' 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;' 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.'* The gospel is placed within the reach of all; and he that will receive its instructions, obey its commands, and cherish its spirit, shall be saved; shall have the peace, joy and security arising from its influence; but he that despises its offers, and sets at naught its counsels, shall not be saved; he shall live in darkness, fear and misery.

The question now arises, whether endless salvation is conditional; whether our exaltation to glory depends upon any works to be performed by the creature? The reader will be particular in regard to the question. It is not, Do the scriptures teach a conditional salvation; but do they teach that *endless salvation is conditional*? A large proportion of the christian church will give an affirmative answer to the question. The public mind seems to have turned to this out of disgust with the arbitrary doctrine of unconditional reprobation. Having become tired of this, they were ready to embrace any other, which wore the appearance of benevolence. But it may be well to ask, if it really makes God more benevolent than Calvinism? According to one, God has reprobated a part to death; brought them into the world for the express purpose of dooming them to endless ruin! But how is it with the other? We answer—He has

* The following texts refer to conditional salvation:—'Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.' 'Who then can be saved?' 'By me, if any man enter, he shall be saved.' 'Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved.' 'We are saved by hope.' 'By which also, ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you.' These are given as a sample of the language of scripture respecting conditional salvation.

placed three quarters of the world, where they have no opportunity of knowing him, and then because they do not, sends them to interminable wo! Now if one makes God partial, a respecter of persons, why does not the other? Both represent him as so arranging his plan, so disposing of his creatures, as to make a part happy and a part miserable. It is true, the steps by which the result is reached are different; but this avails nothing, since they inevitably lead to the same unhappy end.

Again—There is no difference as it regards the two systems, in the severity of the punishment they ascribe to God. They both say, the sinner will be as miserable as God's wisdom and power can make him; that God will not be satisfied with merely shutting him out of heaven, but will doom him to infinite wretchedness; will so change him, as to make all his powers ministers of evil; as to make him loathe himself, and loathe his Maker, and loathe his existence; to wish himself a worm, a viper. In barbarous ages, there were barbarous punishments. It was not enough to imprison; the criminal must be tortured in every possible way in his imprisonment. It was not enough to put to death; the unhappy victim must be executed in the most barbarous manner, which cruelty and malignity could devise. So in relation to these systems. They are not satisfied with cutting off the sinner from divine favor; he must be pursued with God's vengeance forever; he must be converted into a miracle of infinite suffering! So far then as benevolence and mercy are concerned, I can see no great superiority in one system over the other.

Perhaps there is no better way of detecting the fallacy of a doctrine, than by looking at the difficulties into which it leads. If we examine this

doctrine by such a rule, we shall reject it at once; for,

1. It destroys the infinite knowledge of God. Its leading advocates have found it necessary to take the ground, that God does not know all things. Dr. Clarke contends that God has not infinite knowledge. He represents the case in this way: God, he says, has the attribute of infinite knowledge, the same as he has the attribute of infinite power; but because he can do all things, it is no proof that he will; and so, because he can know all things, it is no proof that he does, or will so exercise the faculty of knowledge, as to know all things. To the adoption of this strange sentiment he was driven by the doctrine of conditional salvation. He saw that if he admitted the infinite goodness and knowledge of God, he must also admit universal salvation; for if God be infinitely good, and have infinite knowledge, there can be no doubt respecting the salvation of all men. Hence some who believe endless salvation conditional, have denied the knowledge of God, and represented him as creating mankind with the very best intentions, but as not knowing what the result of their creation would be. In this way, they hope to vindicate his goodness from the charges to which it is exposed according to Calvinism. But why should God choose to be ignorant respecting the result of man's existence? Why choose to be ignorant, when the eternal interests of his offspring were at stake? Why shut his infinite mind against the fate which would await them? If his goodness were infinite, he certainly would have an infinite desire for the welfare of his children; and if he had that desire, he would certainly open his mind upon the consequences of giving the existence which he did. No case can be plainer. Would a kind father choose

to be ignorant respecting the result of certain privileges which he was about to grant to his children? Would he not use every effort to ascertain what effect these would have, and if he became satisfied that the effect would be bad, would he not refuse to grant them? So with God: And as it is admitted that he can know, he certainly would be prompted by infinite goodness to make himself acquainted with the result.

But we ask again—Why should God choose to be ignorant? 'That his goodness might not be impeached,' says one, 'in giving an existence which shall result in infinite evil.' But the very act of creating, under such circumstances, is an impeachment of goodness; for goodness desiring the happiness of all, would infallibly prompt wisdom to the formation of a perfect plan for its accomplishment; it would not suffer wisdom to be dormant, when, by its exertion, the benevolent desires of love might be fully accomplished. Besides, the very circumstance that God chose to be ignorant, implies that he suspected the results of creation would not accord with his goodness; so that his ignorance after all is only a feigned one—at least, he saw enough to convince him that he must be ignorant of the rest, if he would keep his goodness untarnished.

This idea is opposed to scripture as well as reason. All things are naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. He sees the end from the beginning. His understanding is infinite. Known unto God are all things, from the beginning of the world. Thus everything is distincly seen by the omniscient Jehovah—everything is naked and exposed to the view of his eye; and, therefore, to talk about his choosing to be ignorant, is to talk against reason and scripture. Hence God is infinitely wise; and therefore, he

would not make man, knowing that he would be a loser by his existence; he would not place him under circumstances which would endanger his eternal interests. Consequently endless salvation is not conditional.

2. This doctrine is opposed to the will of God. 'Who will,' says Paul, 'have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.'* Now the will of God is absolute. The will of kings is absolute; and God is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. 'He does all things after the counsel of his own will.† Of course, when he made man, and gave him the power which he possesses, he did every thing according to his will. If it was his will that man should be lost, he gave him a liberty which would be the means of his ruin; if he desired his salvation, he gave him no liberty or power by which that desire would be defeated. For instance, suppose a father has two sons, and that he has the power of making them both happy; would he be likely so to form his plan as to render one poor, miserable and degraded? All will say, if he had the ability to make them both happy, he would not fail of doing it. So with God. This plan was formed according to the divine will. It is morally certain, therefore, that it cannot result in the endless misery of any. It will avail nothing to say, man is a moral agent; for why should God give him any agency which would defeat his own will? This would be planning against himself; and if man has an agency by which he can bring upon himself endless ruin, it is plain that God did not will his salvation; for nothing is more evident than that an expected result of a voluntary act, proves that it was desired. The father who should give a weapon of death to his child, knowing it

* 1 Tim. ii. 4. † Eph. i. 11.

would be its ruin, would be justly charged with desiring its ruin, even though he should warn the child against the evil. Therefore, if God gave man an agency, knowing it would be an endless evil, it proves beyond all doubt, that he desired that evil.

3. This doctrine is opposed to the purpose of God. No intelligent being can act without a design; and, therefore, when God gave existence to man he must have had some design; and that must have been first, to make all men miserable; second, to make a part miserable and a part happy; or third, to make all happy. Christians now generally adopt this last proposition, and say, in the language of scripture, that he created all things for his pleasure.* Indeed, there are but few who say he created some for endless misery. The question, therefore, arises—Will God's purpose be accomplished? He cannot change his plan, for he is immutable, 'the same yesterday, to-day and forever.' Besides—were he to change his plan, it would be relinquishing a good purpose, for one which is bad. Not only so—His knowledge is infinite, and all the obstructions his plan would meet, were distinctly seen in the beginning. Therefore, had these been insurmountable, or such as to render the expense of accomplishing it greater than the gain, he would never have formed the plan. Men often attempt what is doubtful in their own mind, but never what they know is im-

* Rev. iv. 11. St. Paul thus describes the pleasure of God:—'Having made known unto us the mistery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' Eph. i. 9. 10. Thus it is the pleasure of God that all should be saved; and for this they were created. How can a being of infinite love take pleasure in the endless misery of man?

softened—he repents—calls on God—receives pardon—and swings off to the regions of glory ! !

Such is the injustice of this system. It crowns devils with bliss and dooms angels to hell ! It permits the vilest transgressors to go 'unwhipt of justice,' and consigns to infinite despair those who were the perfection of moral virtue on earth !

The Scriptures contain nothing in opposition to the foregoing reasoning. There are some texts, I know, which are supposed to teach, that we are placed here to form our characters for eternity; but a few words will show, that they have no reference to any such sentiment.

1. 'Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.'* On this Dr. Clarke says —'The advent of the Messiah was the time of God's pleasure, or benevolence; for which all the faithful were in expectation; and the day of salvation was the time in which this salvation should be manifested and applied. The Apostle, therefore, informs them that this is the time predicted by the prophets;† and, the ministry of reconciliation being exercised in full force, is a proof that the prophecy is fulfilled: and therefore, the Apostle confidently asserts, behold, now is this accepted time; now, the Messiah reigns; now, is the gospel dispensation; and therefore, now is the day of salvation: that is, the very time in which the power of God is present to heal; and in which every sinner, believing on the Lord Jesus, may be saved.'‡ This text then, does not teach that we are probationers for eternity.

2. 'For we are made partakers of Christ, if we

* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† The prediction to which the Apostle refers, and which he quotes verbatim, is in Isai. xlix. 8.

‡ Clarke's Com. on 2 Cor. vi.

hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; while it is said, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.'* These words are supposed to teach that as the Israelites fell short of Canaan through unbelief, so christians may fall short of heaven through unbelief. But the Apostle is not speaking of the future and eternal state; he draws his figure from the Israelites, not to teach that heaven was suspended on conditions, but that the state of christians after the close of the Jewish dispensation rested entirely upon faith and obedience. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, they had many trials to encounter. Persecution was bitter; the enemies of the cross were numerous; but if they would hold fast their confidence till the destruction of the Jews, they should have on earth a Canaan of peace and joy. If not, they should fall with the Jews in judgment, and come short of the promised rest. The destruction of the Jews at the coming of Christ is often given as a reason why the christians should continue faithful. 'Cast not away' says Paul, your 'confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.'† The promise here spoken of, was deliverance from persecution; it was all the blessings which the christians would have when the reins of government were taken from the hands of their enemies.‡ Hence the Apostle says—'Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off

* Heb iii. 14. 15. † Heb. x. 35. 36. 37.

‡ This promise may be found, among other places, in Matt. xxiv. 13. 42—47; Mark xiii. 13—27; Luke xxi. 14—22.

the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.* The night of persecution was far spent, and the Apostles could almost see the dawning of the day of their deliverance. How proper then, to say—Hold fast your confidence and rejoicing firm unto the end.† By end he means, not the end of life, but the end of their persecution.

3. My spirit shall not always strive with man.‡ These words are often quoted to teach, that we can sin away the day of grace, that there is a line even on earth which we can pass, and be beyond the reach of grace. But they have reference to no such event. The connection shows that they refer to the antediluvians, who though exhorted and warned of God, continued to increase in their rebellion. Therefore, God said he would destroy them. His language is—'My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.' This needs no comment. The destruction was temporal; and it was to occur in one hundred and twenty years.

4. 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.'‖ Dr. Clarke says, this should be, 'Seek ye the Lord *because* he may be found; call ye upon him, *because* he is near.' There are times, when in scripture language, God is near his people, and when he is far from them. He is near them, when they enjoy special means of grace, or when great attention is paid to religion. He was near them, when the Savior preached among men, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and when the apostles toiled with their master's burning zeal. What time more suitable to seek the Lord than then? They were surrounded by the means of grace; and the

* Rom. xiii. 11. 12. † Heb. iii. 6. ‡ Gen. vi. 3. ‖ Isai. lv. 6.

slightest attention would have made them christians. Surely it is better to seek an object when we have the means of obtaining it, than to wait till these means are taken away. How often do we neglect the best opportunities of becoming wise and good. How many that will never seek the Lord, except in some time of general awakening on the subject of religion. We can say, therefore, with the prophet, 'Seek ye the Lord, because he may be found; call ye upon him because he is near.' We know not how long our privileges may be continued; and therefore, it is wise to improve every opportunity we have. 'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.'

Does the reader ask, how these views are to be reconciled with the great solicitude of the apostles to convert sinners; with their weeping night and day, and laboring with untiring zeal and perseverance; I answer,

1. A great change was soon to take place in the condition of the world. During the ministry of the apostles, the Jews were on probation. If they received the gospel, they would be saved from temporal destruction; if they rejected it, they would be swept away by the overflowing scourge. How natural that while the Jews were thus on probation, frequent allusions should be made to it, and that the apostles should often point to the evils they might escape, and the good they might obtain.* Consider too, that Judea was the home

* This condition of the Jews accounts for the frequent reference made by the Savior and his apostles to their destruction. Suppose an angel should announce that Boston should be destroyed in one year unless the people repent; would not all ministers in urging them to repent make frequent allusions to the the hastening destruction? Nothing would be more natural. They would remind them often of their probation, and the dreadful consequences of sinning away their day of grace. It was the same with Jesus and his

of the apostles, the land of their birth, the country of their fathers. Here stood the magnificent temple in which they had worshipped the Lord Jehovah, and around which their religious associations lingered with such sacred reverence. Besides—the Jews were their brethren—their kindred according to the flesh. Now could they thus see their country, their temple and their nation, on the very brink of destruction, without being deeply moved? Who of our own city could know that it was about to be reduced to ashes and desolation; and that its people were to perish with hunger, fall by the sword and be sold as slaves, without feeling that his eyes were a fountain of tears?

2. All know that Universalists have much of the same anxiety manifested by the apostles. How can it be otherwise, when they see that the happiness of their friends, and the prosperity of their country depend upon the attention paid to religion. Every man is on probation. If the opportunities of youth are misimproved, we shall reap the consequences in manhood. If we are intemperate and licentious in the meridian of our

apostles. They spoke often of the overthrow of the Jews, because they were on probation, and could avert the calamity by repentance.

There are other reasons for this frequent allusion to their destruction. 1. The spiritual privileges of the Jews were to end with the destruction of their city. 2. Judgments unparalleled in the history of the world were then to fall upon them. 3. This destruction was to be the end of their dispensation. There were reasons too, why Jesus should often address the christians in relation to this destruction. 1. It would be the end of their persecutions. 2. It would be the time of the complete establishment of the gospel dispensation. 3. If they were unfaithful, the judgment would fall upon them, as well as upon the Jews. See Rev. T. B. Thayer's article in the Universalist Expositor of May, 1839, on the question, 'Why do the New Testament writers so frequently speak of the destruction of Jerusalem?'

days, our old age will be miserable. How deeply anxious, therefore, must every christian be, to see the young virtuous, and behold people of all ages walking in the way of wisdom. Every stage of life is a season of probation for the one next succeeding it. Besides—how often are our friends brought to a crisis, when we feel as though their present decision would fix their character and happiness for life. What a moment of anxiety is this to a minister seeking the reformation of his people, or to a parent pleading with his son to break away from sin. He knows that another night of revelry, another intoxicating glass, or another profane oath, will seal him for ruin. How many a parent now stands trembling between hope and despair, knowing not whether his son will be carried by the flood down the awful vortex, or return to duty, usefulness and honor. With what breathless anxiety would a father watch the child standing in unconscious danger upon the brink of an awful precipice. And yet, who would not see his son die a thousand deaths, rather than behold him the degraded slave of sin? What misery is to be compared with that arising from the wickedness of our friends? Is it strange then, that there should be tears, and prayers, and watchings, and trials, in laboring to restore a sinner? Surely there is something that can fill the mind with anguish, besides the fear that we or our friends shall drop into endless wo!

CHAPTER XI.

THE NATURE OF PUNISHMENT.

'PUNISHMENT,' it has been said, 'is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the neglect or violation of duty, with a view to correct the evil.' 'Revenge,' says the same writer, 'is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the commission of injury, with a view to gratify a malignant passion.' To see the correctness of these definitions we have only to attend to the exact meaning of the language we are in the habit of employing on this subject. 'What do we mean, when we say, that we neglect or violate our duty? We mean, that we neglect or destroy our own happiness, or that of others. When we neglect or destroy our own happiness, or that of others, we produce a certain degree of misery. This is wrong, since it is contrary to the design for which we exist, which is to communicate and to enjoy happiness. On account of the commission of this wrong, punishment is inflicted; that is, another portion of misery is produced. Who causes this second portion of misery? The punisher. Thus far, then, the punisher and the punished are on the same footing: they have both done exactly the same thing: they have both produced misery. What then, constitutes the difference between them? The violator of his duty deserves punishment, because he has done that which either has produced, or which tends to produce misery: but the punisher himself has done exactly the same thing, that is, he has occasioned

pain; why then is he *not* worthy of punishment, for the very act of punishing?

The reason is to be found in the *design* with which the punisher inflicts the pain of which he is the occasion. He has in view the restoration of the offender, to a state of feeling and action, indispensable to the happiness of others, and to his own. He produces misery, but it is the instrument he employs to destroy it. If he have not this in view, he is even more criminal than the person he punishes, since the infliction of pain is the only thing he designs: he rests in it as his end; it is his ultimate object; but the vicious in general, produce misery only incidentally, through a mistaken and perverted pursuit of happiness, and it is more malignant to aim *solely* at the infliction of pain, to rest in it as an object and end, than to occasion it by a miscalculation of the means of enjoyment. It is this very circumstance that it rests in misery as its ultimate object, which constitutes the extreme malignity of revenge; and it does not seem possible to show, how he who inflicts pain on an offender, from any other motive but that of correcting the evil of which he has been the occasion, acts upon a different principle.'*

Having given these illustrations of punishment and revenge, we will now proceed to show that all the divine punishments are corrective; that God does not inflict a single pang merely to render the sinner wretched.

1. The nature of God proves this. In speaking of God the Bible employs the strongest and most expressive terms within the whole compass of language. It not only calls him the 'God of love,' but declares that he is love. It represents his love as everlasting, immutable, free, and impartial.

* See T. Southwood Smith on Divine Government.

Thus we read, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love;* 'I am the Lord God, I change not;'† 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time, Christ died for us;'‡ 'for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.'‖ Such are the properties of God's love. Nothing, therefore, can destroy it, or cause it to be withheld from a single human being. Men may change and become sinful; but God's love remains the same; for in all its properties, it is infinite. Now no other punishment but that which is corrective can be reconciled with God's love. This is certain, for 'love worketh no ill.'§ Therefore, if God has an eternal, immutable, free and impartial love, he is incapable of revenge; it is as impossible for him to be vindictive, as it would be to lie or deny himself. I know it is thought he loves the righteous and hates the wicked; that his motives in punishing the latter are different from his motives in punishing the former. This is the foundation of vindictive punishment. But if this be correct, why does God require us to love the wicked? Why does he say, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you? Would he require us to love those he hates, to cherish virtues of which he is destitute? Let the Savior answer: 'I say unto you love your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'¶ Thus the constant manifestation of divine goodness to all men, shows that God loves the wicked, that he has the same parental regard

* Jer. xxxi. 3. † Mal. iii. 6. ‡ Romans v. 8.
‖ John iii. 17. § Romans xiii. 10. ¶ Matt. v. 44. 45.

for them which he has for the good. With God there can be no partiality* or change. Unless we are right in these views, we say God is subject to all the changes of man; that he is tossed about like the waves of the sea; and unstable as the waters.† We say too, that he is subject to hatred and revenge, qualities which we consider most odious in men. Indeed, we make him as much worse than a Nero and a Caligula, as infinite revenge and cruely are worse than finite. But such sentiments are too impious to be cherished for a moment, and we must admit, therefore, what the nature of God proves, that all punishment is inflicted from good motives, and consequently is designed to correct the offender.

2. This may be proved, from those passages which speak of the punishment of the wicked. As

* James iii. 17.

† I am aware that the Scriptures say, 'The Lord hateth the wicked, and those who love violence;' Psal. xi. 5. 'that he hates all the workers of iniquity;' Psal. v. 5. 'that he hated Esau;' Rom. ix. 13. But unless we admit these passages synonymous with those which speak of his hating every abomination; Deut. xii. 31. a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, and him that soweth discord among brethren; Prov. vi. 17—19. 'evil imaginations against neighbors; and a love of false oaths;' Zech. viii. 17. we make the Bible contradict itself, the acknowledged nature of God, and the plainest dictates of enlightened reason. The nature of God being love, he can never cease to love the works of his hands. Therefore, when the scriptures speak of his hating the wicked, they must mean, that he hates their actions, their deeds, their devices, and their principles. By the hatred of God, we are not to understand a passion as in man, but his opposition to what is evil,—and just in proportion as we become polluted, he hates us; or rather, the evil we possess. But this hatred does not change his disposition; it does not cause him to cease from seeking our happiness. Hence, when we were in sin, he loved us, and sent his Son to save us.

a specimen, I will give the following: 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.'* 'For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.'† 'For the Lord will not cast off forever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'‡ 'For my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord; to serve him with one consent.'‖ Thus, though God will hide his face from the wicked; contend against them; cause them grief; cast them off; afflict them; pour upon them his fierce anger; and chastise them, still he will not contend and cast off forever; but will gather them with great mercies, and will turn to them a pure language, that they may call upon his name, serve him with one consent, and be partakers of his holiness. This is indisputable proof, that punishment is inflicted from purely paternal principles. Perhaps it will be said, these passages refer to his dealings with christians, and are not applicable to all men. To this very common remark, I have two replies; first, they do not refer to christians, but to the wicked, to those who obeyed not the voice of God;

* Isai. liv. 7. 8. † Isai. lvii. 16. ‡ Lam. iii. 31. 32. 33.
‖ Zeph. iii. 8. 9.

who received not correction; who trusted not in the Lord; who drew not near to God; whose friends were as roaring lions; whose judges, as wolves; whose prophets, light and treacherous; whose priests polluted the sanctuary, and did violence. These are the ones to whom God, after he had punished them, turned a pure language. Second. If these passages did refer only to christians, it would not alter the case in the least, for they teach the great principles of God's government; they inform us how he deals with the children of men; and what we may expect, if we transgress. And surely, we have no reason to say, he is actuated by different motives in punishing christians for their sins, than the wicked for theirs. 'God is no respecter of persons;' and whoever does wrong, whether saint or sinner, must receive for that wrong. Therefore, all punishment is disciplinary in its nature.

3. This may be proved from those passages which teach that punishment is proportioned to the delinquency of the sinner. As a specimen, I will give the following: 'Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work.'* 'According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies.'† 'He shall reward every man according to his works.'‡ 'Who will render to every man according to his deeds.'‖ 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape?'§ &c. From the foregoing passages, it is plain, that punishment is according to the deeds; they teach what it is perfectly natural to expect,

* Psal. lxii. 12. † Isai. lix. 18. ‡ Matt. xvi. 27.
‖ Rom. ii. 6. § Heb. ii. 2.

that God will punish; but that his punishments will be just; that they will be proportioned to the magnitude of the sins. But such is not the case with a vindictive punishment. Whilst the good parent chastises his child according to his deserts, the angry, passionate parent chastises not according to the deserts, but according to his own anger. The punishments of the former are just and amendatory, but of the latter, unjust and vindictive. Therefore, the circumstance, that God punishes according to the deeds, clearly proves that he designs it for the good of the sinner, and punishes from the best of motives.

4. This may be proved from the word punishment. The Greek word translated punishment, is explained in the late American translation of the common Greek Lexicon, to be punishment, chastisement, correction, the pruning of trees. Admitting this definition correct, our position is clearly established; for when we read, that though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished; that man has no reason to complain of the punishment of his sins; that a man of great wrath shall suffer punishment; that sinners shall be punished for their iniquity; we are to understand by it a corrective process, lopping off the unprofitable branches; branches which hinder the growth in grace and divine knowledge; and which prevent from bearing good fruit. And though for the present it may seem to be grievous and not joyous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.

5. The corrective nature of punishment is expressly taught in Scripture. 'Behold,' says Job, 'happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. For he maketh sore, and bindeth up;

he woundeth, and his hands make whole.'* The language of Solomon is equally explicit. 'My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.'† The Apostle says—'If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.'‡ No testimony can be plainer than this. We learn here the great design of punishment; it is to humble the sinner; turn him away from evil; and make an end of transgression. The Apostle expresses the whole in a single phrase—*that we may be partakers of his holiness.*

6. That punishment is corrective is evident from examples recorded in Scripture. Take as an instance the case of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was proud and haughty, self-confident and self-sufficient, and forgetful of the one living and true God. Hence while looking from his palace upon the massy walls, hanging gardens and towering temples of his city, he exclaimed, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?'‖ Thus 'he attri-

* Job v. 17. 18. † Prov. iii. 11. 12. ‡ 3 Heb. xii. 8—11.
‖ Dan. iv. 30. See also Deut. viii. 2; Psal. cxix. 67. 71. 75. 76.

buted everything to himself, and acknowledged God in nothing;' God was not in all his thoughts; his worship and law were forgotten. God, therefore, smote him with the iron edge of calamity; he drove him from his throne, and caused his kingdom to depart from him, and thus made him feel that the fate of empires and kings rested upon his almighty arm. This was the most effectual method by which he could be humbled, and made to realize his dependance. Hence after a season of punishment, by which he was deeply humbled and effectually converted. he returned to his throne, extolling and honoring the King of heaven, saying, all his works are truth and his ways judgment; and those who walk in pride, he is able to abase.* Thus punishment is corrective. It tears from us earthly comforts, that our hearts may be drawn to God; it 'ploughs up the rocky ground of the soul,' that it may receive the seed of life everlasting; it 'cuts the sinews of our presumptuousness,' that we may lean on the arm of Jehovah.

All experience teaches that punishment is corrective. Men are so constituted that every departure from duty is sure to involve them in evil. Not a single excess in eating or drinking can go unpunished. The moment anger, hatred or wrath takes possession of the bosom, we become miserable. Now why is this, if Deity did not design that the pain resulting from transgression, should prevent the commission of crime? 'To what example can we point, where misery is connected with sin, in which the pain has not a tendency to correct the evil? Every passion of our nature carried to excess is criminal; every passion carried to excess is painful. This pain is said to be the punishment of the passion, now, from its having

* Dan. iv. 37.

passed the bounds of moderation and justice, become criminal. The same is true of every evil propensity, and habit whatever. All are attended with pain or inconvenience, which increases in proportion to the enormity of the evil. What is the design of this constitution? It is not possible to mistake it. It is not in our power to assign to it any other object than correction of the excess, the eradication of the evil propensities, the change of the evil habit.'

These views of punishment agree with the object of God in giving to man a law. Being infinitely happy in himself, and incapable of receiving any benefit either from his own works or those of man, his only object was to advance the interests of his creatures. It was for man's good alone, that the law was given; and consequently man only is injured by transgression. Our sins have not the least effect upon the Almighty. Is it reasonable, therefore, to suppose that because we have made ourselves miserable by violating God's law, that he will doom us to endless misery? Can we believe he will do any thing at variance with his design in giving the law? If he does, he changes his dealings; he becomes our enemy; he seeks our evil instead of our good. Hence he can only inflict a corrective punishment, a punishment that will aid in saving the sinner from the evil in which sin has involved him.* We see here the

* Rev. W. Fisk, in his sermon on the curse of the law, says, 'This view of punishment makes the law worse than useless, a snare and an incumbrance, it makes evil where no evil exists.' He might as well have said—medicine is worse than useless, a snare, &c., for according to our views, sin is a disease, and punishment one of the means by which it is cured. Were we advocates of endless punishment, it might well be said, we make the law worse than useless; for according to that, the remedy is worse than the disease. Thus Mr. F. refutes himself.

error of supposing, that punishment is inflicted solely to maintain the honor of the Lawgiver and the dignity of his government. These we know must be maintained. But why? Not because God suffers if they are not; but because man suffers. Jehovah maintains his government, for the same reason that he established it. Hence we must never separate the honor of God and dignity of his law, from the good of the sinner. They are one and the same. Enforce the law, and the sinner is reformed. Let it be violated with impunity, and the sinner is ruined. Thus the interests of God's government and the interests of the sinner, both require the infliction of punishment.

Before concluding this chapter it may be well to consider some of the objections which have been urged against this doctrine.

1. It has been said, punishment is called a curse, and therefore, it cannot be corrective. Let us apply this to a few cases stated in the scriptures. 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'* Here those events, which work for us an eternal weight of glory, are called afflictions. Again—'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.'† Here those divine dealings which yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness are called *grievous chastisements* or corrections. The objection, therefore, is against the scriptures; for we see that they denominate those sufferings a curse which result in our good.

2. 'If punishment,' asks an objector, 'is corrective, how can it be called a manifestation of God's

* Cor. iv. 17. † Heb. xii. 11.

displeasure, an outpouring of his wrath?' To answer this, we have only to ask, whether by wrath in God, we can understand a passion as in man? If so, the infidel is right in saying, the christian's God is a being of like passions with man, at one time pleased, and at another displeased; at one time overflowing with love, and at another burning with rage! To admit this is to deny the perfection of God, and virtually allow the truth of atheism.* It is to say, the great Jehovah, the infinite and unchangeable God, is susceptible of malignant and vindictive feelings; and that in punishing, he is revenging the insults which have been offered him! God's wrath, therefore, is only his opposition to evil, and implies nothing either in his mind or dealings, at variance with the eternal welfare of the sinner. Hence he

* Should the reader ask, how those texts which speak of the repentance of God are to be reconciled with the above views, we answer,—All texts should be so explained, as to do no violence to the attributes of God. 'God is not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.' Num. xxiii. 19. Man changes because imperfect in knowledge and sinful in his ways. All the causes of change are comprehended in human imperfection; and therefore, as God is perfect he cannot change. Reason, nature and scripture teach this. How then, are we to understand Moses when he says, 'And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart?' Gen. vi. 6. The history of the transaction fully explains this. The world had become deplorably wicked, and God destroyed it. This was a change in his dealings; for he had not only created the world, but provided it with the means of subsistence. This change in his dealings is represented by saying, that God repented, though strictly speaking, God did not change, for he saw all this wickedness from the beginning, and had fixed on the destruction of the world from the beginning. We are therefore, not to interpret this language according to the strict rules of philology, but according to the facts in the case, and the acknowledged attributes of God. Therefore, by repentance in God nothing more is intended than a change in his government.

can punish sin, and still love the sinner. A parent can be displeased with the conduct of his child, and still love him with all the affection of the human heart. This displeasure can be manifested in a corrective punishment, and not a single vindictive feeling take possession of his bosom. Hence a corrective punishment is a manifestation of God's displeasure.

3. It has been argued that this doctrine denies the justice of God. This objection implies that justice is opposed to goodness; whereas 'it is only a particular modification of goodness; goodness modified by wisdom, according to the moral condition of the being with respect to whom it is exercised. A person who forgives an offence upon repentance and reformation, is good: this is one modification of goodness, which is designated by the term mercy. The person who visits an offence which is neither repented of nor amended, with a proper degree of pain, is also good: this is another modification of goodness, to which the term justice is applied. Mercy and justice, therefore, do not differ from each other in their nature, since they equally arise from benevolence, and they differ in aspect only, according to the moral condition of the being with regard to whom they are exemplified. So that justice cannot require the infliction of misery for its own sake: nothing but malignity can either desire or approve of such unavailing suffering. Since justice and mercy equally arise from benevolence, there is as much reason to suppose that mercy requires the infliction of misery for its own sake, as that justice does. The object of justice is not to feast itself with suffering, but to produce happiness by the infliction of pain, where wisdom teaches it is necessary; the object of mercy is exactly the same, only it pursues its purpose by omitting the infliction of pain, where wisdom shows that it is *not* necessary.'

4. It has been said that the system of corrective punishment misrepresents God; that it charges him with vindictive feelings, when he is love, and simply executing his threatened penalty. You might, it is said, as well accuse a government of vindictive feelings towards the man which it executes, as to accuse God of vindictive feelings towards the man he dooms to hell. No objection could be more futile than this. Earthly governments are weak and imperfect, and unable to accomplish all that benevolence might desire. Not so with God; he has all wisdom and power, and can do all his pleasure. He is never like earthly governments reduced to the necessity of choosing between two evils. Hence, if any one is doomed to endless pain, it is because God desires it. It is no removal of the difficulty to say, he has threatened endless misery; and if the sinner will incur the penalty, we are not to charge the blame upon God, or accuse him of vindictive feelings in executing his threatening, for he foresaw and was able to avoid this result; he might, with perfect ease and infinite honor to himself, have so arranged his government as to secure the obedience and happiness of all. Consequently if there is infinite evil in the penalty, it is because God desired it, and had infinite malignity towards the sinner.

Thus all punishment is amendatory. It is one of the measures which infinite wisdom and goodness have employed to correct the waywardness of man, and redeem him from the dominion of evil. 'Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.'† Consequently no more punishment will be inflicted, than the good of the sinner requires; and none after the causes which bring down the judgments of God have been removed.

* Isai. i. 27.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DURATION OF PUNISHMENT.

In the previous chapter we have proved the corrective nature of punishment. If we are right in the views there advanced, it cannot be endless in duration. The phrase endless punishment is a contradiction in terms; for correction implies a limitation. All therefore, that has been said on the corrective nature of punishment, may justly be prefixed to what we have to offer against the idea, that it is endless in duration.

Before entering upon the main arguments against the eternity of punishment, we wish to offer a few remarks touching the character of the doctrine, the great diversity of opinion respecting it, and the foundation upon which it rests.

1. It is the worst evil which could be inflicted upon man. You may suppose Deity a being of infinite malignity, hatred and cruelty; you may give to him all the attributes of rage and revenge that the heathen have ascribed to their gods, and he could do nothing worse. Will the reader pause and weigh this for a moment? Will he ask, how a being infinitely good, can pursue the very course of a being infinitely evil?

2. There is a great diversity of opinion respecting the way in which sinners are to be punished. Some think it will be in a literal fire. To prove and illustrate this, Wesley refers to the *linum asbestum*, or incorruptible flax, known in most parts of Europe. Cloth made of this may be thrown

into the hottest fire, and when taken out again, it will be observed, upon the nicest experiment, not to have lost one grain of its weight. Therefore, he concludes, that if this can remain in the fire without being consumed, the soul may do the same. He says too, that you may as well talk about immaterial water or earth, as immaterial fire, that both the one and the other is absolute nonsense! And he wishes to know if God intended to frighten his creatures with scare-crows, or vain shadows of things which have no being?* Those who adopt this opinion are requested to explain how a material substance can act upon spirit; and show why a spirit should be affected by fire any more than by air or water. Others have said, the punishment will consist in being shut up in a gloomy prison, where the light can never come, and where the sinner will be held in endless bondage with satan and all his troops of angels. Others have said, it will consist in a horror of conscience; in reflecting upon laws transgressed, offers slighted, favors abused, and time misspent. And others, that it will consist in endless hunger and thirst; in an endless desire after what cannot be obtained. Now the Bible cannot give support to all these views, for they are essentially different from each other; and the question arises, which must we believe? As the mere assent to language we cannot understand, is of no importance, would it not be well to settle which the true doctrine is, before any are condemned for not believing it?

3 There is the same diversity of opinion respecting the cause of endless punishment. Some ascribe it to a divine decree which irresistibly drives people to hell. Others say, that our destiny is suspended on conditions. Others, that sin is infi-

* See Wesley's Works, vol. vi. Sermon on Hell.

nite, and will be endlessly punished. And others, that we shall sin eternally, and therefore, be punished eternally. Now each of these systems is essentially distinct from all the rest; and a train of reasoning that proves one, disproves all the others. But can we believe so important a doctrine as this, would not be revealed with more distinctness? We are told that we must believe in endless misery. But when we ask why any are to endure such a calamity, we receive a vast variety of answers; and thus we are lost in an attempt to find which is the true system.

4. There is the same diversity of opinion respecting the means by which to avoid endless punishment. Some say, all will be lost who are not miraculously converted. Others say, all that is required, is a reformation of life. Others say, we must believe the truth, and the truth only. Others, it is immaterial what we believe; if we only live right, we are safe. And others, let us live as we may, we shall be lost, unless members of the true church. Now to all who advocate these conflicting opinions, we say—settle among yourselves on what salvation depends, before you doom us to hell, for not having the necessary qualifications.

5. The Old Testament is silent respecting endless misery. Look at the first threatening. This we have shown was simply moral death.*

Again.—If we examine the penalty pronounced upon Cain, we shall find nothing to favor endless punishment. It is thus expressed: 'And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive

* See chap. vi. p. 98.

and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.' Cain's sin was of the deepest dye—unprovoked and in cold blood, he slew his innocent brother; but even for this enormous offence, God simply said—*A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.* Here was Cain's punishment. But even this he said was greater than he could bear. And the Lord set a mark upon him, and declared, 'that whosoever should slay Cain, vengeance should be taken of him seven fold.' 'In the antediluvian times, the nearest kin to a murdered person had a right to revenge his death, by taking away the life of the murderer.' This caused Cain to say, 'Every one that findeth me shall slay me.' Therefore, God gave assurance to him, that he should not be slain. Now neither in the threatening, nor the fears of Cain, do we find any thing of endless wo. He was to be a fugitive and vagabond *in the earth.*

Again.—When God threatened the destruction of the world by a flood, he said nothing respecting endless suffering. His language was: 'I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them.' Not a word is said here, of an endless hell; man was to be destroyed from the earth; so also were the beasts and creeping things. We might as well, therefore, say, that the latter have gone to endless punishment as the former. Now if an infinite curse were to come on the antediluvians, why was God silent respecting it? Or if he preached it to the people, why have we no record of the fact?

Again.—Speaking of the destruction of Gomorrah, God said he would not hide from Abraham what he was about to do; but he gave no intimation of endless punishment. Besides, the language employed by Abraham shows, that he had no idea

of any such punishment; for he says—'Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?' This clearly shows, that the only destruction he had in his mind was temporal.

Again.—The punishment of sin is thus stated by Moses. 'But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of God to observe to do all his commandments and statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; cursed shalt be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep.' Here is an enumeration of curses, but not a word is said of endless misery. Now why this silence, if God intended to punish them eternally for their disobedience?

Again.—'The Bible records the sudden deaths of many wicked and ungodly men: Ahithophel, who hanged himself—Saul and his armor-bearer, who slew themselves—Absalom, and Jezebel, and hundreds of others whose crimes and deaths are named in the Bible; but never is one word uttered about their being endlessly miserable. Relations mourn over their vices and deaths, but not one word is uttered by which you can infer that they believed that any of them would be endlessly miserable.'

Thus the doctrine of endless punishment is not contained in the Old Testament. If it were, it would certainly be in those portions to which we have referred. They are the places above all others, where it would be found, if found at all.*

* Some perhaps may think it taught in those texts, where the word hell occurs. But Professor Stuart says, (*sheol*) hell in the Old Testament, does not teach endless punishment. See his Exegetical Essays. Dr. Allen, in his work against Univer-

This I consider as an unanswerable argument against the doctrine. It will avail nothing to say, it is distinctly taught in the New Testament; for before admitting that, it may be well to ask, why a doctrine so essential to the interests of our race, should not have been revealed before? Why was it withheld for four thousand years? Christ is said to have brought life and immortality to light; but never is he said to have brought to light a state of endless pain. This theory makes the mission of Christ a curse instead of a blessing; for it is instrumental in sending millions to endless wo, who otherwise would have been exposed to no such danger.* How then can it be called a better covenant?

The foregoing views will prepare the mind for what we have to offer against the eternity of punishment.

salism says, 'If in any instance the word (*sheol*) includes the idea of misery, and means the invisible state of the wicked in wo, yet this import must depend on other circumstances, and not simply on the term sheol, which expresses only the unseen place of the departed.' This is giving up Psal. ix. 17. 'The Old Testament is confessed by many eminent divines to contain no hint of future rewards and punishments. 'In the Jewish Republic,' says Bishop Warburton, Divine Legation of Moses, B. v. Works, vol. v. p. 159, 'both rewards and punishments promised by heaven were temporal only.' 'This dispensation,' says Dr. Paley, Ser. xiii. 'dealt altogether in temporal rewards and punishments.' To these might be added, Grotius, Episcopius, Dr. Campbell and many others. 'Many,' says an English divine, 'deny that the punishment of eternal death was implied in the sentence denounced against Adam. Among these are Bishop Burnet on the 9th Article; Dr. Burnett on the Articles; Dr. Hey in his Noreesian Lectures, and Mr. Ludlum in his Essays.'

* Rev. W. Fisk says, 'The curse cannot be more than is threatened, for more would charge upon God the injustice of inflicting suffering upon his creatures beyond what his law requires.' Hence, none who lived under the Mosaic dispensation have gone to perdition.

1. It is opposed to the goodness of God. To be satisfied of this, we have only to consider, that known unto God were all things from the beginning; and that, therefore, he could not be good in giving an existence which should prove an infinite curse. It matters not how this curse was caused, whether by an arbitrary decree, or by human agency; for as it was foreseen by God, it makes him the original cause of the evil; and therefore, destroys his goodness. Nothing is gained by saying, God has a right to do as he pleases; for if he causes infinite evil, it proves him wanting in goodness. Neither will it avail aught to say, God's infallible knowledge of man's ruin, does not compel him to incur it; that all have power to be saved; and that if lost, the fault is our own; for God foreseeing the ruin, would not have exposed us to it, if infinitely good. Our agency only implicates us with folly, but does not free Deity from blame. Hence, if one soul is endlessly miserable, God is not infinitely good. Infinite goodness cannot be the author of infinite evil.

2. Endless misery is opposed to the mercy of God. Mercy has been defined to be that benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart, which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or treat an offender better than he deserves. It differs from love; for while we may love the innocent, we cannot show them mercy. It differs also, from favor; for while God may show favor to angels, he cannot show them mercy. Thus the exercise of mercy implies the existence of sin; something done for unworthy offenders. How full of meaning then, are those expressions, which represent God as rich in mercy, abundant in mercy, full of mercy, having mercy upon all. This mercy is everlasting, impartial, unchangeable and free; and therefore, stands directly opposed to endless wo.

How can he be merciful to the being he dooms to infinite pain? How can he have mercy upon all, when some are endlessly punished? Can any way be pointed out in which God has mercy upon the sinner he dooms to hell? He does him no good, but all the evil his wisdom can devise, and his power execute! He does nothing in love; he inflicts upon him an endless torture! Now how is this compatible with mercy, tender mercy, abundant mercy, impartial mercy? Hence if God has mercy upon all, he cannot doom one soul to endless wo.

3. Endless misery is opposed to the glory of God. The greatest glory of God must consist in the most full and perfect manifestation of his perfections. Hence the scriptures teach that God's glory increases just in proportion to the spread of the gospel. For his glory to be full, therefore, all must bow in submission to him.* Thus the Savior says, 'Glorify thy Son that thy Son may also glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'† The creation of the world was a great display of divine glory, because it gave an exhibition of wisdom, love and power. The gift of Christ was a great display of glory; for it exhibited the abundant mercy, grace, and compassion of God. As to design the salvation of the world was the greatest glory of goodness, would not the greatest glory of wisdom and power consist in carrying this design into effect? If they are employed in any different work, it must be opposed to goodness, and, therefore, opposed to true glory; or if they fail of accomplishing this

* We speak of declarative glory. The real glory of God can neither be increased nor diminished, for he is perfect.

† John xvii. 1. 2. See also Rev. v. 13.

object, it must be as great a dishonor, as for goodness to limit its designs. It will then be as glorious to achieve as to design the salvation of the world. Indeed, the former will be far the more glorious, because a union of all the glories of wisdom, goodness and power. Hence the greatest glory of God consists in the happiness of all, because that is the fullest and most extensive exhibition of his perfections. Therefore, endless misery is opposed to God's glory. I know it has been said, God is as much glorified in the damnation as the salvation of sinners. But if so, how could the work of salvation increase his glory? According to this, the glory added to goodness, is taken from justice, so that salvation would be no increase of glory. Besides—how could he be glorified in having his will defeated, his purpose frustrated, and moral evil eternally perpetuated? How could he be glorified in the infliction of a misery, that results in infinite evil?

4. Endless misery is an unnecessary evil. It is not necessary for the perfection of God's government. Every government must have penalties annexed to its laws, or they will be merely advisory, and have no means of enforcing their demands. But no penalty in a perfect government can defeat the object for which it was established. For instance —The government of God was established for the greatest good of the universe. Therefore, it cannot contain the penalty of endless death; for that would prevent the accomplishment of the greatest good.* We cannot say, more good will be effected

* Some have thought the greatest good of the universe consists in the misery of a part. If so, what is the difference between the greatest good and the greatest evil of the universe? We should think the man insane who should declare that God formed his government to accomplish the greatest evil of the universe! The greatest good, therefore, must consist not in the

by the threatening of endless pain, than by the threatening of a limited punishment, because its efficacy will be greater; for that is to make the divine government imperfect, like those formed by men; and it is to say, that God will not accomplish all his will.

Not only so—The good effects of punishment consist, not in its duration, but in its certainty, reasonableness and justice; and in its being inflicted with mercy. Such a punishment can be grasped and felt; everything connected with it is credible, and sanctioned by universal experience. It does not admit the possibility of escape from sin; it removes all doubt, and shows that we shall as certainly be punished as there is a God. But all these effects are lost in endless punishment. It appears so unnatural and unreasonable; so cruel and unjust, that it becomes a matter of constant doubt; we feel that God will not inflict it; and, therefore, we are left without any restraint. Thus endless punishment destroys the real efficacy of God's government; and consequently it cannot be true. God is good, and does good. He surely would not, therefore, admit an unnecessary endless evil. Men are short-sighted, and cannot always form their laws so as to accomplish all they desire. But God has infinite wisdom. Men are weak, and cannot always execute their laws. But God is almighty. Human governments are imperfect; and sometimes they destroy one for the good of the many. But God's government is perfect. Hence it is utterly impossible that endless punishment should make any part of the divine government.

5. It cannot be reconciled with those Scriptures which teach, that God does not afflict willingly;

good of a part, but the good of all, the greatest good of every individual.

that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner.* Now if he takes no satisfaction in the infliction of punishment, he can inflict no more than the good of the sinner requires. He does not afflict willingly; he punishes because the good of the sinner requires it. Hence, he cannot contend forever. This is one among the things which God cannot do. He cannot lie; he cannot change; he cannot be cruel, unjust or unmerciful. How then can he continue ages interminable to torture his creatures, and that too when they are begging for mercy? This is to make evil one of the ultimate ends of his government; whereas, he only wills evil, as a means of producing an ultimate end.

6. Endless punishment cannot be reconciled with the moral precepts of the gospel. The great leading object of the gospel is to make men good, to spread virtue and piety throughout the world; and any doctrine, which does not do this, is false. This is as certain, as that there is a God. Let us look then at the precepts of religion. These require us to love all men, to overcome evil with good, to render blessing for cursing. Now any doctrine, at variance with these, or out of which they do not naturally grow, is false, because precept and doctrine can never be at variance. For instance—Suppose a preacher requires us to love all men; to treat all as brethren, and to do good to all; but at the same time teaches that God loves only a part; that he has made provision for only a

* God wills some things in themselves considered, and others all things considered. In the latter sense he wills sin and punishment. He wills them not as an end, for they are disagreeable to him; but he wills them as a means for effecting an end. Happiness is willed in itself considered; pain all things considered. God willed the death of Jesus Christ, not because he delighted in his suffering, but because his death would save the world.

part, and has sent his Son to save only a part; should we not be compelled to say, that either his doctrine or his precept was wrong inasmuch as they are directly at variance? Again—Suppose a man should require us to overcome evil with good, should insist on this as the great principle on which men should uniformly act; but at the same time teach, that God renders evil for evil; and that this is the great principle of his administration; should we not be compelled to say, that either his doctrine or his precept was wrong; for while one justifies revenge in God, the other requires forgiveness in man?

What has in all ages of the world been the boast of christians; their strong argument for the gospel? Has it not been, its pure and perfect system of moral and religious duty? But are we now to say this unparalleled system is a mere outside show of the gospel, like the smiles and soft speeches of the hypocrite; that while the moral precepts are of this character, christianity at heart is black as sin; that it is built on partiality and revenge; and that it ascribes them even to God himself? Are we thus to say—The gospel is like the hypocrite, who smiles to deceive; who talks of love, while hatred burns within; who feigns friendship, while seeking the consummation of his vindictive designs?

How different is this from the Bible! That calls upon us to love all, because God loves all; to love and bless our enemies, because God loves and blesses his. It makes following God as dear children, synonymous with rendering good for evil, doing as we would be done by, and overcoming evil with good. Thus it makes precept and doctrine agree, and conspire in promoting virtue, holiness and happiness. And to preach doctrines of partiality and revenge, cruelty and unkindness, with precepts of love, mercy and forgiveness, is

like sowing wheat with one hand, and tares with the other; like spurring the angry steed, we command to stand still.

Bishop Horne says—'Moral preaching, or preaching disconnected with the great doctrines of salvation is powerless and ineffectual, like a watch without the main spring.' And this is true; for while moral preaching instructs in duty, the doctrine from which the moral grows, acts on the heart; stirs it up to duty; and moves it to exertion, just as the main spring of a watch sets all the wheels on going. But if mere moral preaching is thus like a dumb watch—if it needs the main-spring, what must we say of that preaching where the doctrine is arrayed against the morality; where doctrine stands as a kind of flaming sword, to prevent people from doing their duty; where it hedges up their way; where it lays as an impassable wall across their path—where it confronts them with all its ragged points, with all its bitterness, and cruelty, and revenge and eternal walls of partition; thus warring against love, warring against mercy, barring and steeling the heart against kindness and forgiveness, pouring malignity and hatred into the very soul?

Tell me now—Am I right in saying, the gospel requires love, mercy and forgiveness of all men, under all circumstances? If so, I am right in saying, endless punishment cannot be reconciled with the moral precepts of religion.

7. This doctrine destroys the power of the gospel to give rest. To wipe the tear from sorrow's eye; to give hope to the despairing; to spread peace and joy throughout the earth, is one great object of the gospel. Hence, that doctrine best calculated to produce this end, is nearest the truth. I assume nothing here—I take the ground of all advocates of the Bible. How often do christians,

of all sects, put the question—'Who would exchange the hopes of the gospel for the gloomy prospects of infidelity? who would exchange the thoughts of heaven, of eternal bliss, for the thought of annihilation; for the notion that the mind dies with the body, that the lovely and excellent of the earth perish like the brute?' But here let us pause a moment. According to common opinion, we and all our friends are exposed to something infinitely more fearful than annihilation; and often instead of teaching us to hope in the salvation of our friends, this doctrine teaches us to believe that they are doomed to ceaseless wo—that the door of mercy is shut against them. How many thousands and thousands die yearly; and those too among the gifted, the generous and the kind, which this doctrine consigns to infinite misery!

Now if this be the true doctrine, wherein is its consolation? Wherein is its power to comfort, of which christians have so long boasted; and which they have urged as a proof of its superior value? If it teaches even the possibility of our being lost, it cannot afford a single emotion of rational joy. Every person on the earth must infinitely prefer to be a viper, than a man, if exposed to endless ruin. I would rather see a whole universe consigned to annihilation, than to have one being miserable forever. Annihilation is an infinite blessing compared with endless wo. Hence if endless misery is possible; if one human being is damned eternally, christianity is not a system adapted to our distressed condition in life. Instead of drying up our tears, it fills the heart with the bitter waters of despair; instead of filling with hope, it stabs the soul with the sharpest arrow in the quiver of infinite vengeance. Therefore, the true doctrine knows nothing of endless wo; of an endless separation from those we love; but it assures us,

that living or dying, we are the Lord's; that in this or the other world, we are encircled in his arms of mercy; and that in due time, we shall all mingle our voices in hymns of eternal praise around the throne of heaven. Here is peace—a peace like a river.

8. There is no word unequivocally expressing endless duration applied to punishment. The strongest are those rendered forever and eternal. Maclaine in his Moshiem, says—'The word *aion* or *aeon* is commonly used among Greek writers, but in different senses: Its signification in the Gnostic system is not very evident, and several learned men have despaired of finding out its true meaning. *Aion* or *aeon* among the ancients was used to signify the age of man, or the duration of human life. In after times, it was employed by philosophers, to express the duration of spiritual and invisible beings.' Thus the word was primarily used to signify *limited time.* In this sense, it was used by the Savior and his Apostles, when applied to punishment. 'Several of those who wrote in the Greek language during the second, third and fourth centuries, maintained the doctrine of Universal Salvation; yet they freely and habitually applied the terms in question to the subject of punishment, without any explanation, such as our modern prepossessions would have made necessary in order to prevent mistake. This shows that the ancient Greek fathers never suspected that those terms would, of themselves, convey the notion of endless duration, when applied to punishment. And this conclusion is confirmed by another fact, viz. that those Greek fathers who on the contrary did not believe in Universal Salvation, and who began at length zealously to oppose that doctrine, never quoted the terms now in question, against their opponents, but resorted to other arguments.

I speak of the most ancient Greek christians; those who lived before the fifth century.'*

This use of *aion* answers to the use of *oulam* by the prophets. In speaking of temporal judgments, they call them everlasting. They speak of making the land a *perpetual* hissing;† of an everlasting confusion which shall not be forgotten;‡ of a perpetual shame;‖ and perpetual desolation.§ In applying aion, therefore, to temporary punishments, Jesus and his Apostles followed the example of the prophets; and as they spoke to people familiar with the Old Testament, they must have been understood to speak in the same sense.¶

Thus we see that the words rendered forever and eternal, are no proof that punishment is endless; for at the time the Scriptures were written, they were never used in an unlimited sense, when applied to punishment.

9. The inspired writers never speak of a place of endless punishment. Within a few years, a great change has taken place, in the public mind, on this subject. Formerly, people supposed there

* We read of the beginning and end of *aion*. It is used too in the plural. But how could this be if in the singular it were endless? Could we say hid from (*aionon*) eternities? It is used in a double form. Thus we have *forever and ever*. But if forever mean endless, why add *ever*? Why say eternity and eternity? Lexicographers have defined *aion* thus—Life, existence, *eternity*. All say it is used in a limited sense. Schweighaeuser, Valpey, Pickering and Schrevelius do not give eternity as one of its significations. Phavorinus, Parkhurst and Donnegan give *time* as its primary signification. The word therefore, is variously used, and its meaning can only be determined by the connection in which it stands. When applied to God, it is endless; for he has an endless being. When applied to punishment, it is limited; for punishment is corrective, and not endless in its nature.

† Jer. xvi. 16. ‡ Jer. xx. 11. ‖ Jer. xxiii. 40. § Jer. xxv. 9.

¶ The remarks we have made on *aion* will apply to aionios; for no adjective can signify more than the noun from which it is formed.

were numerous texts teaching the existence of an endless hell. Judging from the popular preaching, ministers knew as much about its location and boundaries, as they knew of any portion of the earth. It is not so now. An inquiry into the subject has cut the proof down to a very limited number of texts. The word hell, it is found, does not always denote a place of endless pain.* The chief reliance is now placed upon Gehenna, a word occurring twelve times in the New Testament. A few facts respecting this will clearly show, that it is never used to signify a place of endless misery.

In the Old Testament, it is used in two senses, literal† and figurative. In the latter sense, it was

* Professor Stuart admits that hades in the New Testament is synonymous with sheol in the O. T. and that neither signifies a place of endless torture. See his Exegetical Essays.

† Professor Stuart says—'The word Gehenna is derived, as all agree, from the Hebrew words Gee Hennom; which, in process of time passing into other languages, assumed divers forms; for example, Chaldee Gehennom, Arabic Gahannam, Greek Gehenna. The valley of Hinnom (Gee Hennom,) is a part, (the eastern section) of the pleasant Wadi or valley, which bounds Jerusalem on the south, Josh. xv. 8; xviii. 6. Here, in ancient times, and under some of the idolatrous kings, the worship of Moloch, the horrid idol-god of the Ammonites, was practised. To this idol children were offered, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Ezek. xxiii. 37. 39. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2. If we may credit the Rabbins, the head of the idol was like that of an ox; while the rest of its body resembled that of a man. It was hollow within; and being heated by fire, children were laid in its arms and were there literally roasted alive. We cannot wonder then at the severe terms in which the worship of Moloch is everywhere denounced in the Scriptures. Nor can we wonder that the place itself should have been called Tophet, that is abomination, detestation, (from Toph, to vomit with loathing.) Jer. xxxi. 32; xix. 6. 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Ezek. xxiii. 37. 39. After these sacrifices had ceased, the place was desecrated and made one of loathing and horror. The pious king Josiah caused it to be polluted, 2 Kings xxiii. 10; that is, caused to be carried there the

used by Jeremiah to represent the destruction of Jerusalem.* His prediction had a literal fulfilment at the time Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans; when human bodies were meat for fowls and beasts; when parents ate their own children; and they buried in tophet or gehenna till there was no place. In the Old Testament, gehenna is never applied to the future world. This all critics allow. Hence the question is—When did its meaning change? When was it used to signify a place of endless misery? We answer, not till after the New Testament was written.

The last book of the Old Testament was written about 400 years before Christ. The works published among the Jews from this time down to A. D. 100, that have been preserved, were the Apocrypha, the works of Philo, and of Josephus. These all treat upon future punishment; but never apply gehenna to it. The first instance found in which gehenna was used to signify a place of misery hereafter, was A. D. 150. The Targums usually quoted to prove that it was so used in the time of Christ, were not written till as late as A. D. 200. This is the opinion of the most eminent critics of the present age. Thus, there is no evidence that gehenna was used in its present sense, in the time of Christ.†

This conclusion is confirmed by the Savior's

filth of the city of Jerusalem. It would seem that the custom of desecrating this place, thus happily begun, was continued in after ages down to the period when our Savior was on earth. Perpetual fires were kept up, in order to consume the offal which was deposited there. And as the same offal would breed worms (for so all putrifying meat of course does,) hence came the expression, Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' Stuart's Exegetical Essays, pp. 140. 141.

* Jer. vii. 29—34 ; xix. 4—15.

† See Jewish usage of the word Gehenna in Expositor, volume 3.

use of the word. It is certain that he employed it, as Jeremiah did, to represent the destruction of Jerusalem. He asks the Jews, how they could escape the damnation of (gehenna) hell. He then shows, that this damnation was to come, not in the future world, but upon Jerusalem. There is no disputing this fact; for he says—'*all these things shall come upon this generation.** To the disciples he speaks in the same manner. He tells them that they had infinitely better endure the persecution they encountered, than to go back to Judaism, and suffer *hell-fire*, or gehenna fire with the Jews. Turn to our Lord's discourses to his disciples, containing the word gehenna, and you will find it impossible to resist the conviction, that he was speaking of the temporal evils which would fall upon them, if they turned from him. He was describing a punishment that would be inflicted at his coming, and which he calls *losing the life.*†

This reasoning is confirmed by the fact that the Gentiles were never threatened with Gehenna. Now if it signified a place of endless wo, why were they never threatened with it? Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, says, he declared the whole counsel of God; but the word Gehenna is not found in his discourses or epistles! There is no way in which to account for this, but to say, it was used to denote the judgment to come upon the Jews, a judgment which was not to involve the Gentiles. Had it signified a place of endless wo, to which all sinners were exposed, it would have been preached to the Gentiles as well as Jews. Not a single instance can be found, in all the New Testament, where anything is said of Gehenna to any but

* Matt. xxiii. 33. 36. Also from verse 15 to 39.

† See Matt. x. 23. 39; comp. Matt. x. 22, with Matt. xxiv. 13. 34.

Jews. John's gospel does not contain the word, because it was written for the Gentiles. It is found in no one of the epistles, except that of James, because none but this was addressed to Jews.

These facts cannot be reconciled with the popular use of Gehenna. They have long been before the public;* but they have never been answered. And till they are, all criticisms upon Gehenna; all appeals to lexicographers, will be in vain. Therefore, Gehenna does not teach a place of endless wo.

Such are some of the arguments against the eternity of misery. Let the reader weigh these; let him reflect that endless misery makes God infinitely cruel; that its advocates cannot agree respecting it; that it is not taught in the Old Testament; that it destroys the goodness, mercy and glory of God; that it is altogether unnecessary; that it is opposed to the moral precepts of the gospel, and takes away its power to comfort the afflicted; that the Bible never speaks of endless punishment, or a place of endless punishment, and I know he will say, the doctrine cannot be true; *that it is not only without proof, but opposed to all we know of God, or his government.*

* See Rev. W. Balfour's First Enquiry.

CHAPTER XIII.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

The opinion has long prevailed, that this is not a state of rewards and punishments; that so far from this, it is a state of trial, where we form characters for eternity; that God allows us to go on without calling us to an account; and that at death he sends us to heaven or dooms us to hell, accordingly as we have been good or bad. Let us look at this idea a moment, in the light of reason.

Suppose our laws were established on this principle, and that transgressors were not called to an account, till they arrive at the age of fifty or sixty; that all this time, they are permitted to go on, committing all manner of crimes; should we not call this policy ruinous to the interests of the country? Do not all hold that transgressors should be called to an account for their first offences, that thereby they may be restrained from the further commission of crime, and made to feel that they cannot do wrong with impunity? And yet, this principle, so universally received, is rejected by all who say, God does not judge in the earth, but suffers man to go till death before punishing him!

There is another difficulty. One great imperfection in all human laws, is their inability to take cognizance of sin, till it breaks out in overt acts. They cannot sit in judgment on the heart, examine the motives, and check the beginnings of evil. But the error in theology, which we here oppose, makes the Divine law far more defective than

human laws; it says God neither sits in judgment on the heart, nor on overt acts; but that he allows man to go on desiring, meditating and planning evil; heaping crime upon crime, strengthening and fortifying himself in iniquity, till he has no power to go farther, till death ends his career, before he calls him to an account! Now can we believe that an infinitely wise God has a government so defective as this? If so, he might learn of man.

Again.—The sentiment which defers all punishment to the other world, makes it purely vindictive. It says—God permits men to do all the evil they can; to commit all the thefts, and murders, and outrages within their power; and that when death ends their wicked career, he dooms them to unending wo, not for any good to be accomplished, but because they have done evil. Now this is purely vindictive. Suppose a father should treat a child in this way, and allow him to drink, swear and lie; to commit every imaginable abomination, till the age of twenty, and then torture him in the most cruel manner; should we not say, he ought to have corrected the son's first departures from duty, that he might have prevented the further commission of crime; and that by neglecting to do this, the father is a partaker of his guilt? Would it not seem also, as though he had suffered his son to sin thus, that he might have a pretext for this cruelty?

Again.—The sentiment, which defers all punishment to another world is defective, because it provides a way of escape. It says, 'Go on in sin; live in it till the age of seventy, eighty or ninety; curse and blaspheme God; oppress and wrong the widow; ruin unprotected innocence; stain your hands in human blood; but repent before you die, and you escape all punishment; you go immediately to glory.' Not only so—it makes man a

gainer by sin; for the same sentiment says—the wicked are happier in this world than the good; that were it not for endless wo, there would be no inducement to be virtuous here. Suppose the laws of our State should say, if a man steals and does not repent, he shall be punished; what good would they do? Suppose a father should say—Son, if you swear and lie, and do not repent before you are twenty, I will severely chastise you; what restraining influence would it have? And yet, the doctrine in question says, that God teaches, if we do not repent, before death, he will punish us eternally, and that this is the only punishment he inflicts!

As a further confirmation of these views, let us look at man, as a physical, organic, social and religious being.

Man has a physical nature. By this I mean, he is made up of bones, muscles, nerves, blood-vessels, &c. These parts, which compose man, can be made sources of happiness or misery. A broken bone, an irritated nerve gives pain, because the breaking of the bone and the irritating of the nerve, are a violation of the laws of our physical being. Therefore, to derive happiness from our physical nature, its laws must not be violated.

Again.—Man has an organic nature. By this I mean, that he possesses those functions which act together in causing growth and decay, and in producing health and vigor. Now any violation of organic laws, destroys their healthy action, and produces feebleness of body, sickness and death. Thus intemperance in eating or drinking is a violation of an organic law, and prevents the right action of those functions, on which health and vigor depend. Obedience to these organic laws, keeps all the functions in a healthy state, and makes them sources of happiness.

Again.—Man is a social being. By this I mean, that he is possessed of those affections, which render him capable of society; that he has kindness, gratitude and love. The more these affections are developed, the greater is the happiness we enjoy; the more do we delight in doing good, and in performing our duty, and the closer are we bound to each other. A violation of the laws of this social nature, destroys this love and kindness, breaks up this mutual regard, and cherishes hatred, unkindness and ill-will in the bosom, and thus makes the soul the seat of misery, the very fountain of bitterness and wo.

Again.—Man is a religious being. He has a nature which craves worship. He is capable of faith, hope and love. To constitute him a true christian, it is only requisite that his higher powers should be properly developed and cultivated. If this nature is neglected, and its laws violated, man will be deeply wretched. He will have an aching void in his soul, which nothing can satisfy. He will be out of his true element, and therefore, miserable. Religion is the food and life of the inner man.

Now the laws of God correspond with these different natures. They prohibit intemperance in eating and drinking, excess of every kind, and require a right use of all the means given for the support of life. They also prohibit hatred, revenge, malice and ill will, and require love, kindness, forgiveness and good will. Hence obedience to the laws of our nature, is obedience to the laws of the Bible; and therefore, this obedience is righteousness. On the other hand, disobedience to these laws of our nature is disobedience to God, and constitutes wickedness. Thus it is just as certain, that the righteous are recompensed in the earth, as that temperance is conducive

to health; it is as certain, that the wicked are recompensed in the earth, as that intemperance produces misery; or that anger, hatred and revenge render us wretched.

Perhaps it will be objected here, that we sometimes see the wicked healthy, active and vigorous; and therefore, they cannot be recompensed in the earth. To this I answer; in such cases, they have not violated the law of their physical and organic nature; they have only violated the law of their moral nature; and to know their wretchedness, you must be able to look in upon their heart; to see the restless feelings there at work; to hear the reproaches of conscience, and the angry contentions of conflicting desires; you must see the hatred, revenge and thirst for cruelty, which like so many scorpions prey upon the soul, and gnaw at the very vitals of happiness.

Another perhaps will say, while the wicked are robust and healthy, the righteous are often feeble and sickly; and why is this, if the righteous are recompensed in the earth? There is no difficulty here. Thousands suffer under infirmities, that are hereditary, and therefore, are not a recompense for evil, but a misfortune. Thousands too, ruin their health by imprudences and a wrong mode of living. This they may do without guilt, and yet it violates the law of their physical and organic nature. Not only so, while they thus ignorantly transgress their organic and physical laws, they may be obedient to the moral law of God, and have all the joy and serenity arising from love to God and their fellow beings, from kindness and affection, from forgiveness and good will.

Another perhaps will say, while the temporal affairs of the wicked are prosperous, it is often the case, that the righteous are poor and destitute. This does not destroy our positions, because all

laws, physical, organic, social and religious, operate separately and independently of each other; and, therefore, if a man violates his social laws, but obeys the others; if while he indulges in profaneness, blasphemy, hatred and revenge, he is temperate, economical and industrious, his temporal affairs may be prosperous, even when at heart, he is as deeply wretched as man can be.

Not only so—Righteousness does not teach man how to manage his temporal affairs; how to turn things to his gain; it only teaches him not to idle his time, and squander his property in dissipation. Hence good men are often destitute of a tact for business. There are many who have no faculty for conducting affairs. Put them at the head to plan and lead, and they will be sure to go wrong. They may be excellent men, but they have not the faculty to lead. Others there are, who are altogether unprincipled, that know the best method of getting ahead, and will prosecute their plans as by magic. Besides—the wicked may be fortunate, and the good unfortunate. Indeed, virtue has nothing to do with wealth any further than honesty and temperance tend to increase it. We are not then, to decide respecting the happiness of a man by his robust appearance, or the prosperity of his temporal affairs. We must examine his motives of action, and know the state of his heart before we can judge. Kings, swaying in grandeur, the sceptre of nations, are often the most miserable of all human beings.

The scriptures most fully sustain these views. They represent the righteous as travelling in a pleasant path, as being like a tree planted by the rivers of water, as having peace of mind, and joy of heart, and as enjoying a constant sunshine of soul. They represent the wicked as going in a dark, crooked and dangerous way; as having no

rest day nor night; as being enshrouded in darkness, and like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

An examination into the natures of sin and virtue, will fully sustain the foregoing views.

1. Sin. We have only room to consider this as a master. The Bible speaks of the servants of sin. To see that it is the worst of all masters, consider that it allows no time for repose. Should we engage ourselves to labor in the employ of a man who would allow no time for rest, but keep incessantly driving us on night and day, we should denounce him as a barbarian, and leave him with indignity. But how is it with sin? Does it allow its servants rest? Is the thief, the robber, or murderer at ease? Is his mind calm and tranquil? What too, is his external condition? Suppose the murderer has a home of plenty; that his dwelling is a palace of splendor and grandeur; that he is blessed with a wife, children, and a large circle of friends; must he not fly from all, and become an outcast in the world? Is he not hunted from city to city, forest to forest, and country to country? See him climbing the distant mountain; roaming the trackless forest; hiding himself in a lonely cave; or seeking refuge in the lanes of cities, where poverty and crime dwell in all their lank and haggard wretchedness. Thus he flies, a guilty wretch, who fears to meet his own child; a vagabond, having no rest in body or mind.

Again.—Sin gives no remuneration for the service it requires. In the labor we perform, we are stimulated by the hope of an adequate compensation. This nerves the arm in the various hardships of life. This stimulates us to rise early and work late; and without this there is no inducement to labor. Now does sin give this adequate remuneration? Does it fulfil its promises? Look around

upon society for an answer. Here is a young man whom sin has called to the haunts of dissipation. He may have a genius and talent which if rightly employed would give him the highest rank in society. He may have accomplishments and attainments which would gain him admittance to the first circles of fashion. He may have wealth that would enable him to enjoy all that the world can give of variety, comfort, or splendor. Suppose now he brings all these qualities and possessions into the service of sin; what will be his remuneration? Surely he is entitled to something great; but what does he have? *He has promises.* He is told that stolen waters are sweet; and that bread eaten in secret is pleasant; that the wicked are not in trouble like other men. But mere promises are nothing; and yet this is his only pay; for God assures us, that the way of the transgressor is hard; and that he turneth the way of the wicked upside down. Soon his genius and talent are gone; his accomplishments and attainments are exchanged for rudeness and incivility; his wealth is scattered to the winds; and he is left, the mere wreck of what he once was, the skeleton of his former self! This is the remuneration of sin! Its promises are deception; its repose ruin; its rewards disgrace; its ways darkness; its end death! Its home is wretchedness; its food poison; its companions the darkest forms of misery and despair! Besides—The more faithful we are in the service of sin, the worse is our condition. The more we labor, the poorer we grow; the faster we run, the deeper are we involved in misery! Thus, it is by deception; by holding out promises which it never fulfils; by raising expectations which are never realized, that sin succeeds. No man would become a thief, gambler, libertine, or murderer, unless he expected to be a gainer thereby. Hence

the repeated cautions of the Bible respecting the deceptions of sin. 'By fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.' 'With all deceivableness of unrighteousness.' 'You have used deceit against your own souls.' Thus the wicked are very properly represented as being blind and deluded. 'The way of the wicked is darkness; they know not at what they stumble.' 'He goeth after sin straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of stocks.'

Again.—Sin is a tyrannical master. It may be fitly represented by those tyrants in society, who wish to build up an iron despotism, and who rule all subjected to their control, in the most arbitrary manner. Look at the revengeful man. He fancies he has been wronged by a brother; and his feelings have become aroused to the highest degree of vindictiveness. Now while under the dominion of such a passion, you may as well reason with the wind as with him. He will not rest till he has effected a brother's ruin. How many family quarrels have been kept up for years in this way! How many lawsuits commenced, battles fought, and murders committed. Everything that the ignorant, obstinate tyrant revenge commands, must be done, however unreasonable and cruel, or however dreadful in its effects. Take intemperance as another illustration. There are many considerations which show, that we should never use as a beverage, anything which intoxicates. It is not necessary to bodily strength or intellectual vigor. It does not enable us to endure fatigue, guard us against the pressure of heat, the severity of cold, or the danger of exposure to wet. It creates an appetite which is ever demanding more and more; and which increases in its demands, in proportion to its indulgence. Not only so—It ruins the health, bloats the system, destroys the appetite

for food, and undermines the constitution, so that every indulgence in the intoxicating cup, hurries us to the grave. Besides, this cup destroys the reason, maddens the brain, hardens the heart, alienates the affections, blunts the sensibilities, and breaks up the peace of families. And yet, when the habit of drinking is once formed, men will pour down the poison like water. They are driven on by the burning appetite which has been created; and which will seek its gratification, if faithful partners die with sorrow; if children are hungry and naked; and every evil of intemperance comes upon them. Such is the tyranny of sin. It will listen to no argument; yield to no persuasion; but will hold on upon its victim with an iron grasp.

These three considerations show us something of sin, and enable us to see the utter impossibility of being happy, while in rebellion against our Maker. Does the reader ask how these views are to be reconciled with those texts which speak of the happiness of the wicked; which declare that those are happy who deal very treacherously; we will answer by pointing to a young man, who starts in life with every advantage of birth, fortune and education, but who is a spendthrift, a lover of the cup, a gambler. As you see him dressed in fashion, riding in splendor, and indulging in all his sports; as you see him at the gaming table, at the festive board, and hear his noisy mirth, his roar of merriment, you may think him the happiest of all human beings. And he is happy. Yes—the wine as it sparkles in the cup is pleasant to the taste, and his various amusements render him delighted with the world. But then look at the end of all this, and you will see, as David did, that the wicked stand in slippery places. In a short time, his fortune is squandered, his health ruined, and he becomes a poor, loathsome, miserable being,

begging perhaps his bread from door to door; a living monument of shame and disgrace; a mere relic of what once walked forth in all the vigor of health, and the pride of virtue, honor and rank. Such is the pleasure of sin. Well, therefore, do the scriptures say, that Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a *season*. The happiness of sin is outward and momentary. How many drag out a life of wretchedness, because for a few days, they gave themselves up to the splendid and fascinating joys of sin! There is a fatal poison in every flower which grows in 'the garden of guilty pleasure.' The fountains of iniquity may come up bubbling and sparkling like the water of life; still they send forth only the water of death. 'Vice may be seated upon a dazzling pavilion, decorated in all the shining apparel of this lower world; but the dagger of death is hid beneath her robes.' Words of honied sweetness may fall from her lips, but they are false as perjury. Truly, the way of the transgressor is hard.

2. Virtue is in all respects the opposite of vice. It is a good without limitation. It is useful, however we may be situated; whether in sickness or health; in adversity or prosperity; amid friends or foes. Riches may tempt us from duty; honor may render us vain; sagacity may be misapplied; personal endowments, love of pleasure and the powers of wit, may plunge us into difficulty; but virtue cannot lead us astray. We can never be too honest in our dealings, upright in our walk, and firm in our attachment to truth and justice.

Again.—Virtue always retains its value. It is not so with riches, honor or any earthly good. Uncertainty is stamped upon every thing beneath the sun. 'Ten thousand contingencies ever float on the current of time, the smallest of which, is

sufficient to dash our frail bark in pieces.' But virtue is always the same, knowing no change, and never deteriorating in value. It is good in the morning, in the meridian, and at the close of existence. It is always safe; and never like sin, does it require calculation, to know whether it will be best to employ it.

Again.—Virtue accords with all the laws of our being. It requires no excess in eating or drinking; no violation of friendship or principle. In every command given, God has consulted our interest. Look through the Bible, and you will find that the vices there prohibited, tend to destroy the body, mind and heart; tend to break up the foundations of society; and would, were they to exert their full influence, annihilate the race. Suppose that all the commands of God were uniformly violated by all men; the earth would be one vast field of blood; man would constantly prey upon his fellow man; and the work of destruction would go on till all was ruin from sea to sea. If any doubt this, let them look at those nations over whom sin has gained the most power. Sickly and feeble, they are the theatres of constant excitement and barbarous outrage. They are like a man staggering and reeling on the brink of a drunkard's grave; they are tottering on the very verge of dissolution; they are convulsed and racked by internal disorder; they are enfeebled and oppressed by a wasting disease, and just ready to fall under the scourge they have brought upon themselves.

On the contrary, the virtues of the Bible all tend to peace, order and human good. Were they all uniformly cherished, men would live together in love; nation would not lift up sword against nation; chains and fetters would be broken, and the poor, down-trodden captive, would be treated as a brother; justice, truth, humanity and love would prevail over the whole world.

How truly, then, can we say, Righteousness tendeth to life; wisdom's ways are pleasant, and all her paths are paths of peace; great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.

And yet, reader, we are told, that the wicked are happy, and the righteous unhappy; that if there is no endless hell, there is no inducement to seek God!! But remember, 'The way of the transgressor *is* hard.' Cling to virtue then; for it is your life. Flee from sin; for it is your ruin.

CHAPTER XIV.

JUDGMENT.

If it be true as advocated in the previous chapter, that sin is misery, and virtue happiness; that evil is sure to bring its own punishment, and obedience its own reward, there is neither reason nor consistency in the idea, that a day has been set apart in eternity, for the judgment of the world. A righteous God will not doom sinners to hell, for deeds which have been adequately punished on earth. Accordingly, we find the work of judgment always represented as taking place in the earth. Not an instance can be found, in all the Scriptures, where it is declared to be in eternity. He *cometh* to execute judgment in the earth.* The Scriptures represent the judge as coming to this world for judgment. Hence we read, 'Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth;' 'I am the Lord which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth;' 'shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' 'He cometh to judge the earth.' The Savior also is represented as coming to execute judgment upon the earth. 'And a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.' 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' 'And hath given him authority to execute judgment.' But the question will here arise, how this judgment is executed; in

* Psal. lxvii. 4; xcvi. 13. Jer. ix. 24.

what way men are judged in the earth. We see, it will be said, no judgment-seat erected; no formal trial taking place; and how, therefore, can it be said, God judgeth in the earth? We cannot give a more explicit answer to this question, than by quoting the language of Butler. He says—'An author of nature being supposed, it is not so much a deduction of reason as a matter of experience, that we are thus under his government: under his government, in the sense as we are under the government of civil magistrates. Because the annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, in our power to do or forbear, and giving notice of this appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, is the proper formal notion of government. Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behavior, be owing to the Author of Nature's acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For, if civil magistrates could make the sanction of their laws take place, without interposing at all, after they had passed; without a trial, and the formalities of an execution: if they were able to make their laws execute them themselves or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their government then, as we are now; but in a much higher degree, and more perfect manner. Vain is the ridicule with which one foresees some persons will divert themselves, upon finding lesser pains considered as instances of divine punishment. There is no possibility of answering or evading the general thing here intended, without denying all final causes. For, final causes being admitted, the pleasures and pains now mentioned must be admitted too, as instances of them. And if they

are; if God annexes delight to some actions and uneasiness to others, with an apparent design to induce us to act so and so, then he not only dispenses happiness and misery, but also rewards and punishes actions. If, for example, the pain which we feel upon doing what tends to the destruction of our bodies, suppose upon too near approaches to fire, or upon wounding ourselves, be appointed by the Author of Nature to prevent our doing what thus tends to our destruction; this is altogether as much an instance of his punishing our actions, and consequently of our being under his government, as declaring, by a voice from heaven, that if so, he would inflict such pain upon us, and inflicting it whether it be greater or less.'*

Thus we are just as much judged by God, in the established order of his government, as though he were personally with us, and daily arraigning us before the throne on which he is seated.

This work of judging is not to be confined to the operations of God's laws upon our physical nature. He judges the world of mind on the same principles. Men are so constituted, that they cannot knowingly and intentionally violate the divine law without feeling condemned. Pain of mind, horror of conscience, is as naturally the effect of transgression, as pain of body is the effect of bodily disease. Hence Solomon most appropriately and forcibly represents the effects of sin by asking —'Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can he go upon hot coals and his feet not be burnt?' 'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul.' Here then is the work of judgment. No man can violate a single law, without being arraigned before the bar of God; and hearing the decision of the Judge against

* Butler's Analogy pp. 133. 134. New York edit.

him; and feeling the execution of his condemning sentence. Thus we all appear before the judgment seat, and give an account for every idle word we speak. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Our words are an index to the heart; they show our principles, our motives of action. Therefore, to say, we shall be judged by our words, is only declaring, in another form, that we shall be judged according to our character.

Here we see the certainty of judgment, of a full and adequate punishment for all our sins. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' Yes, we must all be brought into judgment. The wicked may join hand in hand, but they cannot deceive the Judge, nor avoid the penalty of his laws. They may make lies their refuge, and hide themselves in every concealed place, but it will avail nothing; God will bring them into judgment. They cannot escape from the hell within. The stings of conscience will be felt. It can neither become so seared nor dead, as to fail of keeping the soul in constant fear and agitation. Look into the hearts of the most cruel and depraved of our race. Watch the sleep of the hardened criminals in our prisons, or of the most daring pirate that has unfurled his bloody flag upon the trackless ocean; and you will be convinced, beyond all doubt, that there is a fire constantly burning in his heart, and a worm preying there without a moment's interruption. But the clamors of conscience are not the only sources of misery. Unbridled passions; headstrong desires; hatred, envy and revenge, are like so many scorpions in the breast; so that sinners are constantly in the very depths of hell. Let the wicked

reflect upon this; and remember, that for every wrong, God will bring them into judgment. This he did under the Mosaic dispensation. 'Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?'* The apostle does not say, the sins committed under the old dispensation *are* to receive a just recompense of reward; but that they *have received* it; God punished them in the earth. Now if God was so strict to mark iniquity then, will he allow us to sin with impunity under the light of the new dispensation?

The common view of judgment is directly opposed to the foregoing sentiments. According to that, the judgment is in eternity; and the Judge is altogether partial; he does not hold every man accountable for his sins; he judges only a part according to their deeds. It says, that all the world will be assembled together at the bar of God; and those who died in faith, though in the eye of the law equally as guilty as the worst of sinners, will be admitted to glory; while those who died without faith, will be cast off beyond the reach of mercy itself. How does this agree with the declaration of the apostle, that *all* must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; and that *every one* must receive according to that he hath done, whether it be *good* or *bad*.† The Apostle does not say, men

* Heb ii. 1. 2. 3.

† This text (2 Cor. v. 10) contains some words which were supplied by the translators, that should be omitted. They are

will be judged according to their professions or faith; but according to what they have *done*, whether *good* or *bad*.* Now as all have done some good, and all some evil, it is impossible that they should be rewarded both for their virtue and vice, if the reward of virtue is endless happiness, and that of vice endless misery, as no man can have both. Hence the idea that believers will not be punished for their sin, and that unbelievers will not be rewarded for their virtue. And this is called justice, the justice of God! The earthly judge who should act upon this principle, would be driven in indignation from the bench. No people would submit for a single moment to such an administration of justice. God, therefore, judges '*every man* according to his deeds.' We must all stand before his judgment-seat. If we are not judged here; if the judgment is still future, David and Solomon, Peter and Paul, will have their sins held up before them, and be doomed to suffer their punishment. 'God is a just God.' There is another difficulty. All the arrangements of God are wise and consistent; but there is neither wisdom nor consistency in the idea of a general judgment. It is wholly unnecessary. God knows the character of all; to his all-searching eye every heart is open. Wherein, then, is the necessity of a day of judgment? Ministers sometimes say they shall appear against their people at the judgment; as though God was to call up witnesses on that occasion. Did earthly

—*done*, *his*, and *it be*. Without these it reads—'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *in body*, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.' *Receive in body*—this refutes the idea, that the text teaches a judgment in eternity. Besides, there is nothing in the text which intimates that we shall all appear at one time before the judgment-seat.

* See an able sermon on this text, by Rev. H. Ballou, published in Philadelphia by Rev. A. C. Thomas.

judges know the characters of those arraigned before them, a formal trial would be wholly unnecessary. God knows all hearts; and therefore, it is not necessary that he should institute an examination, and call up witnesses.

Again.—When we die, it is supposed we go either to heaven or hell; that our fate is fixed for eternity. Ministers uniformly speak of the wicked as having gone to hell, and the virtuous to heaven. Why then call them back from their respective places to judgment? What should we think of the court, that should take a convict from prison, and try him a second time, when it knew for a certainty that he was justly convicted? And yet we say, God calls up the damned from hell, tries them, and dooms them back to the same place! We say the same respecting the saints in glory! It would be blasphemy to suppose, that he would have occasion to rectify, at the last judgment, some mistake of the first; and that any would find their condition reversed after the great day of trial! Thus we see the inutility of a judgment in eternity.

Again.—If such an event is to take place, and at the resurrection of the dead, why do we never read of it in connection with the resurrection? We have several minute accounts of that glorious event; but nothing is said of a judgment then to take place! This is a surprising omission. Those who now believe in this judgment, never describe the resurrection, without also describing that. There is no way of accounting for this difference, without admitting that the inspired writers had no faith in such a judgment. We would urge this upon the especial attention of all who say, God will judge the world at the resurrection.

Against the foregoing views an objection will be urged, drawn from those scriptures which declare

that God will judge the world by Jesus Christ. This language, it will be said, found on almost every page of the New Testament, can never be reconciled with the opinion that we are judged here. To give an adequate answer to this objection, we must consider that there are two senses in which Christ judges the world.

1. The Scriptures represent him as making a separation between the righteous and the wicked, receiving the former into favor, and passing a condemnatory sentence upon the latter. The time when this judgment should take place is often spoken of; and frequently under the titles *of the day; the day of judgment; the day of the Lord; the last day; the end of the world.* Thus we read– 'And so much the more as ye see the day approaching;' 'reserved unto fire against the day of judgment;' 'the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;' 'the same shall judge him in the last day;' 'so shall it be in the end of this world.' The more common way employed, to represent the time of this judgment, was to say, it should take place at the coming of Christ. Thus it is said—'I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead* at his appearing and kingdom.'† 'Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.'‡ The judgment here described was to taken place at Christ's appearing or coming.

* By quick and the dead believers and unbelievers are intended. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' 'You hath he *quickened* who were dead in trespasses and sin.'
† 2 Tim. iv. 1. ‡ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

The judgment is thus described—'When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.'* 'And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day†.'

Allusions were often made to this approaching judgment. The people were reminded that they were on probation; that the axe was laid at the root of the tree; that the wheat should be separated from the chaff. 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance.' Turn to God, and save yourselves from the wrath, which in the day of reckoning, shall be poured upon the guilty. 'Whosoever, therefore, shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven; and whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.' Therefore, unless you wish to be denied or rejected at the day of judgment, do not deny me now because my religion is unpopular. The Apostles made the same

* Matt. xxv. 31—33. † 2 Thess. i. 7—10.

use of the day. They exhorted the people to improve their privileges, to remember the coming judgment, and to keep in mind that they were on probation.

The question will now arise, When was this judgment to take place? When was the last day, the end of the world, the coming of Christ to be? We can answer these questions by those passages which speak of the judgment. 'Who shall give account to him that is *ready* to judge the quick and the dead.'* This shows that the judgment was near at the time this language was written. Christ was, nearly two thousand years ago, *ready* or *prepared* to judge. 'Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' Here the day of judgment, when the perdition of ungodly men should take place, was said to be in the last days, or when the world should be destroyed. That all this had no reference to some period yet future, is certain from Peter's explanation of the phrase, *last days*. Speaking of the gift of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, he says, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the *last days*, saith God, I will pour out my spirit up-

* 1 Peter iv. 5.

on all flesh.'* Again—St. Peter says, Christ was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world; but was manifest in these last times for you.'† Thus by *last times* Peter meant his own time. It was the last days of the Jewish dispensation; the end of the world which was to be destroyed by fire.‡ Jesus said the end of the world should take place during the life-time of those who attended on his ministry.‖ He is said to have appeared at the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. In the Apostles' day, it was said, 'On whom the ends of the world have come.' By world here, the Jewish age or dispensation is intended, the end of which came during the life of the first christians.§ At the end of this *world or*

* Acts ii. 16. 17. † 1 Peter i. 20.

‡ This language is highly figurative. He draws a comparison between the Jews and the antediluvians. The former were destroyed by water, and the latter were to be by fire. Fire is a common figure used to represent the destruction that came upon the Jews. See Matt. 3. 10. 12; xxv. 41. 2 Thes. i. 8. It is certain, that by heavens and earth, which Peter says, were reserved unto fire, he meant the Jewish nation; for speaking of the antediluvians, he says: 'Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. Now it was the people that perished; and so it was the people that were to destroyed by fire. Peter has no reference to the destruction of the material universe. 'In prophetic language,' says Dr. Clarke, 'great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens. The fall of Babylon is represented by the stars withdrawing their light, and the sun and moon being darkened. Isai. xiii. 9. 10. The destruction of Egypt is represented by the heavens being covered, the sun enveloped with a cloud, and the moon withholding her light. Eze. xxxii. 7. 8. The destruction of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, is represented by casting down some of the host of heaven, and the stars to the ground.' Dan. viii. 10.

‖ Matt. xxiv. 3. 6. 13. 34.

§ The word here rendered world, is not *kosmos*, which signifies the material universe; but *aion*, which here signifies age or dispensation.

age, was the judgment. Then Christ came in the glory of his Father to reward every man according to his deeds; to bring every work into judgment; to bring to light the hidden things of dishonesty; and cast off all who denied and rejected him. It is certain that he came then to judgment. He repeatedly affirmed that he would thus come. 'Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'*

Thus the day of judgment, when Christ was to separate the righteous from the wicked, was when he came, not in person, but in power and great glory, to overthrow the Jews, and redeem his followers from persecution. This judgment was not to be in eternity, but in this world. It is not yet future, but took place nearly two thousand years ago. God, therefore, has judged the world by Jesus Christ. At this time was the perdition of those ungodly men, who fought against the Savior and his disciples. At this time, the unjust received the punishment to which they had been reserved; while the godly were delivered out of temptation. This was the time when men had to give an account for the manner in which they had spoken of the Savior. The hidden things of dishonesty were then brought to light, and the counsels of the heart made manifest. The christians were all placed upon the right hand; the wheat was gathered into the garner. By observing the directions of Jesus, and looking out for the signs which should foretell the destruction of Jerusalem,† the christians all made their escape, and fled to Pella beyond the Jordan. But while they were thus secure, destruction came upon their enemies. Thousands

* Matt. xvi. 27. 28. See also Matt. xxiv. 30–34. Mark xiii. 24–30. Luke xxi. 27–33. Heb. x. 35–37.

† Matthew xxiv. 15–18.

fell by the sword; thousands perished with hunger, and thousands were sold as slaves. No judgment, in any age of the world, has ever equalled this. These were indeed days of vengeance; so that the Apostle could truly say in reference to this, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.'

Thus the fulfilment of all these texts is a matter of history. The Savior judged the world,* when the Jews were destroyed; when their magnificent temple was laid in ruins, and their dispensation was brought to an end. Then the christians triumphed over their enemies. Through the interposition of their judge, they were secure, while those who had troubled and persecuted them were calling upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb.

In this judgment, none were doomed to endless pain; it was not a final decision. True, the misery to which the wicked were sentenced was called everlasting, but we have seen that *aionios* did not signify endless when applied to punishment by the inspired writers; and that the prophets applied to temporal judgments a word synonymous with *aionios*. Neither was the reward of the righteous endless. The phrase eternal life is a common expression, to denote the enjoyment experienced in this world, through the influence of the gospel on

* Before him shall be gathered all nations. There was no formal trial. Jesus did not literally sit upon a throne. There was however, a literal separation between the good and bad; and this was accomplished through the divine agency. Thus they had to give an account at the bar of God. The judgment was as real as though they had been arraigned before a literal judgment-seat. 'All nations,' 'all the tribes of the earth,' were thus judged. These phrases do not mean all mankind here. They are used in a restricted sense, as any one may see by consulting the following places, viz: Luke ii. 1. Acts xi. 28; xix. 27; xxiv. 5. Matt. xxiv. 14. Mark xiii. 10.

the heart.* The kingdom they inherited was not endless glory, but the kingdom which Christ set up on the earth. It is called the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven.†

It is said to be *at hand*,‡ pressed into, taken with force by the violent, among men, and to come with power. It was shut up by the Jews;‖ taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. It is likened to wise and foolish virgins; to faithful and unfaithful stewards. It is represented as having a small beginning; as gradually extending its limits; making its progress against many obstructions; finally triumphing over all obstacles. Now none of these representations are applicable to heaven. That was not at hand when Christ commenced his ministry; that was not taken with violence; it was not among men; not shut up by the Jews; not like foolish virgins or unjust stewards. That had neither a small beginning, nor a gradual growth. Therefore the kingdom which the righteous inherited, was Christ's kingdom, erected in this world, for the happiness of man. Hence their

* John iii. 15; xvi. 36; v. 24. When eternal life is spoken of as a reward or the result of faith, it denotes simply the influence of religion on the soul here.

† The following among many other texts refer to this kingdom: Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17; v. 10. 19; viii. 11; xviii. 23; xxv. 1. 14. Admission to this kingdom depended upon faith and obedience. See Matt. v. 20; xviii. 3. Luke xiii. 24—30. John iii. 3. These passages are often urged against Universalism. It is said the entrance to the kingdom being conditional, and some not complying with the conditions, it is certain all will not be saved. This argument has no weight; for the kingdom is not endless glory; but Christ's kingdom on the earth. This they could not enter without faith and obedience. The entrance to the kingdom of glory above, rests upon the free and saving grace of God.

‡ See Dr. Campbell's Diss. on the phrase kingdom of God.

‖ By their opposition to Christ and his cause, they did all in their power to prevent people from becoming christians, and thus shut up the kingdom.

reward was on the earth. Here they enjoyed spiritual life, and experienced the many blessings arising from faith in Jesus, and submission to his laws.

Thus the reader has before him a distinct view of the way in which Christ judged the world; of the punishment he executed, and the reward he bestowed. The judgment was at the end of the Jewish age or world; the punishment was the woes which came upon the Jews; and the reward was the blessings experienced by the christians. No reference is made to eternity in any thing connected with this judgment.*

2. There is another sense in which Christ judges the world. The word judge signifies not only to pass sentence, but to govern or rule. In this sense it is applied to the Savior. The prophets predicted that he should judge or rule the world, and bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and judgment unto truth. Thus we read—'He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he has set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law.† These predictions mean, that Christ shall set up a government or kingdom in the earth; that he will rule the people in righteousness, and that the result shall be the general prevalence of virtue. Hence

* There are other days of judgment spoken of. Sodom and Gomorrah had *a* day (not *the*, as our translation has it) of judgment. It was when they were destroyed. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, Capernaum, had each a day of judgment. These cities were destroyed for their sin; and this was their judgment. When the Savior says—It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the [a] day of judgment than for Jerusalem, he means simply, that Jerusalem should be more terribly destroyed than they were. See Dr. Clarke on Mat. xi. 24.

† The word here rendered judgment is *mishpat*, and signifies, says Dr. Clarke, rule, form, order, model, plan, judicial process, trial, sentence, acquittal, &c. &c. See Clarke on Isai. xl. 1—4.

it is said—'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.'* This judgment should lead to the subjection of the wicked, and the triumph of virtue.

'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.' Such is the 'sublime strain of eastern poetry,' in which the prophet describes the results of Christ's reign. 'He opens a beautiful view of the state of the world as a state of returning innocence. He represents all nature flourishing in peace; discord and guile abolished; the most hostile natures reconciled, and the most savage reformed and tamed.'

In the New Testament the same work is ascribed to the Savior. 'And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'† This language has generally been applied to a judgment in eternity, but to see that it has no

* Isai. xi. 1—4. † Acts xvii. 30. 31.

reference to any such event, it is only necessary to consider, that it was addressed to the Gentiles, and was designed to set forth the reason why the ministry of repentance was given them. Their ignorance in times past, God had winked at, or suffered, for a wise end, to remain. 'Who,' says St. Paul, 'in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.'* He had left the Gentiles without any revelation. But a day or time was fixed, when Gentiles as well as Jews should have the truth from God. That day had come. Jesus Christ was the one whom God had appointed, to break down the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. They had the assurance of this in his resurrection. Therefore, to them the ministry of reconciliation was given; and they also were now commanded to repent. The day had already commenced, when God was to rule them by Jesus Christ. Unless we are right, how could the fact that God had appointed a time to judge the world by Christ, be given as a reason why they should *then* repent? Observe—'The times of this ignorance God winked at; but *now* commandeth all men every where to repent, because,' &c. *But now commandeth.* Why *now*, more than formerly, if the judgment was in eternity, and all were bound to it? This proves incontrovertibly, that Paul was speaking of Christ's reign in the earth; of the judgment he would execute by his religion.†

This explanation agrees with the divine prediction, 'He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' 'In his name shall the Gentiles trust.' The

* Acts xiv. 16.

† The period of Christ's reign is frequently called a day. See Isai. xlix. 8. Zech. xiii. 1—8; xiv. 1. 6. 9. Malachi iii. 2. John xvi. 26; viii. 56. 2 Cor. vi. 2. A day in scripture is used for a long time, in some places. See Deut. xxxii. 35. Psal. xcv. 7—11. Heb. iii. 8. 9.

Savior's kingdom was built up in the land of heathen darkness. There his law was proclaimed, and his authority reverenced.

In the same sense Christ now judges. The work is constantly going on, wherever his religion is proclaimed. He rules by the principles of his gospel. How has his religion elevated the degraded, humbled the proud, reclaimed the wandering, and enlightened the ignorant. Every man in christendom, is more or less ruled by the Savior. Even the proud infidel, who denies his religion, and scorns his name, owes much of what virtue he may possess, to the gospel. This has created the sentiment, and formed the habits of the community in which he lives, and thus he has been moulded in a great degree by the Savior.

Nor is this all. Jesus arraigns us at his bar, and tries us. While his law is known, we cannot sin without being condemned. Every man, whether heathen or christian, has a conscience which smites him whenever he does wrong. But if a conscience, uneducated by the gospel, can smite, what must be the blow of that conscience, educated by the Savior himself? Reader—Look a moment into your own soul; call up to remembrance your feelings whenever you have departed from duty; and I know you will admit, that you have felt the restraining power of truth, and the severity of its stern upbraidings and rebukes. Christ rules by his gospel. 'Its influence enters into the secret closets and visits the inward council chambers of the soul, and there it "reasons of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." O could we get admittance to this secret parley, what should we there see? what an influence should we there see exerted? When criminal desire claims indulgence; when lust burns; when anger rages; when revenge seeks retaliation; when

envy rankles; when pride swells; when covetousness gripes the heart, and ambition moves the soul; in short, when any one or more of the unholy passions, stirs up the soul to any thing unlawful, then who is that, with aspect so dignified, with authority so commanding, and with eloquence so persuasive, standing amidst the dark and mutinous group, commanding and entreating, threatening and promising, expostulating and reasoning, until every wicked and corrupt Felix, and every proud and wanton Drusilla trembles? O it is the genius of the gospel of Christ! She stands there, from morning till night, and from night till morning, restraining, and sometimes changing, the wicked purpose of the heart. And have you, my brethren, never witnessed such a scene? Though not in others, yet doubtless you have in yourselves. What is it, when temptation presented itself in all its most plausible and promising forms, what is it that restrained you? Was it the fear of civil authority? did the secular arm lay its restraint upon you? No, you are conscious that this, in most cases, had no influence upon you. But it was because the inward kingdom of God came nigh unto you, with its restraining grace. And whatever you may think of the natural integrity of your hearts, however much you may pride yourselves, that you are not as other men, you owe it to this same influence, that you are moral men and useful citizens. So far as you have escaped the influence of unholy passions, so far as you have been submissive to good government, and useful to community, so far you are bound to say, "by the grace of God, I am what I am." "*

Such are the senses, in which God judges the world by Jesus Christ. These are the ways in

* Rev. W. Fisk's Sermon before the Vermont Legislature, 1826.

which Christ executes judgment in the earth. This is the work of judgment, which the Father has committed to his hands. None are sentenced to endless pain. All the judgments of which the Scriptures speak, are to destroy sin, and reform the sinner. God has one great leading purpose in all he does; and that purpose is the happiness of all. The law requires this, and can be satisfied with nothing else. The work of judgment is, not to defeat this, but to aid in its accomplishment. None are doomed to endless pain; all punishment is disciplinary. If there were no law or judgment, men would have nothing to restrain them, and we could not hope in the salvation of all. We rejoice, therefore, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; that there is a righteous Judge in the universe; one who will mete out to all a full and adequate punishment for their sins.

Reader! God will bring you into judgment. His government is perfect; his eye all-searching; and there is no escape from the consequences of sin. If, therefore, you will love life, and see good days, refrain your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile; eschew evil; do good; seek peace, and ensue it.*

* 1 Peter iii. 10. 11.

CHAPTER XV.

FORGIVENESS.

According to the two preceding chapters God is a being of inflexible justice; and is strict to mark iniquity against all who violate his law. Justice will have all its demands; every man shall suffer to the full extent of his deserts. There is no remission of punishment, either on account of the Savior's death, or the sinner's penitence. This must be so; for punishment is consequential; and you might as well suppose that forgiveness can heal a wound, as clear us from punishment. Such is certainly the doctrine of the Bible. It is also certain, that the Bible speaks of forgiveness; of God's forgiving those whom he punishes according to their deeds. Indeed, we have these two sentiments in the same connection. 'The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.'* 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.'† 'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity

* Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. † Psal. xcix. 8.

is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double, (an hyperbole, signifying a full and satisfactory amount) for all her sins.'* The question will here arise, how God can fully punish sinners, and yet forgive them? Were a just punishment endless, this would be impossible. But punishment, we have seen, is corrective and limited. A remission of such a punishment would be a curse instead of a mercy, because a just punishment is as essential to our welfare, as anything that love can do. Hence the common opinion that forgiveness is a remission of punishment, is altogether incorrect. God forgives the sinner which he fully and adequately punishes. This shows that forgiveness bears no resemblance to judicial pardons. The laws of our country give to her rulers the power of pardon, because there is always danger of convicting the innocent. This danger arises from false witnesses; from the high excitements into which all are liable to be thrown, and from a variety of other causes. Hence some who have been convicted in courts of justice have been found innocent, or guilty only in part of the crime for which they were condemned. In such cases, parden should be granted. But God, with respect to his decisions, can labor under no such mistake, for to him 'all things are naked and open.' Therefore, his pardon cannot resemble the judicial pardons of our country.

Again.—The Scriptures never speak of forgiving punishment. This is an important fact, and throws great light on our subject. The reader will be careful, therefore, to keep this distinction constantly in mind. Thus we read, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors'—'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father

* Isai. xl. 2.

will forgive yours'—'With power to forgive sin' —'Who can forgive sins but God only ?'—'Whose transgression is forgiven'—'Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people'—'The people shall be forgiven their iniquity'—'Thy sins be forgiven thee'—'All sins and blasphemy shall be forgiven' —'And their sins shall be forgiven them'—'Having forgiven you all your trespasses.' Here is no remission of punishment. How then, can the common doctrine of forgiveness be correct ? There is not a syllable concerning it in the Bible. Forgiveness of sin only, is here taught. This agrees with the uniform language of the Bible, that Christ delivers us, not from a just punishment, but from sin, from iniquity. 'Unto you first God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'*

Again.—'In the present light of our subject we can perceive the consistency of the sentence in the writings of Moses, which was referred to in the beginning of this article. 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' God, in tender mercy to sinners, employs means in his wise and benevolent government, to reform them, and free them from transgression and sin. And when by the influence of those means which the divine government employs, sinners are brought to repentance, or turn from the love and practice of sin, then too they are freed from the guilt and condemnation of sin, and God does not impute to them their sins, or treat them as sinners any longer. They are permitted to enjoy the sweets of communion with God, in the consciousness of

* Acts iii. 26.

the divine approbation, as if they had never sinned. But while they remain 'guilty,' walking in the way of transgression, God 'will by no means clear' them from the suffering of that death and misery, that tribulation and anguish, which the divine law makes the sinner's just portion. Accordingly, the person who has been forgiven, has suffered the proper punishment of his sins; even as the man who has been healed of a bodily disease has suffered the natural evil of that disease. The sick man is freed from pain by being freed from the disease by which the pain was produced. And when the disease is removed, and the man restored to health, his then experiencing a freedom from pain, and the pleasure of bodily health is in accordance with, and not opposed to, that organic law of the corporeal system which connects pain with disease; for the law connects pleasure with health. Even so, when the man who is reformed and forgiven, experiences a freedom from the evil or punishment of sin, and enjoys the pleasure of virtue and truth, this is in accordance with, and not opposed to, that divine moral law, which connects punishment with sin: for the same law connects a holy and rational pleasure with virtue and truth. The language of this divine law is, 'The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.'* 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die,' —in his sin that he hath sinned, and in his trespass that he hath trespassed, in them shall he die. 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness he shall live.'† Surely this law is not opposed to men's be-

* Prov. xi. 31. † Ezek. xviii. 4. 21. 22. 24.

ing freed from the condemnation or death of sin, when they are freed from sin."*

Again.—The Scriptures speak of blotting out our transgressions, and of remembering our sins and iniquities no more. These expressions are synonymous with the phrase, 'forgive sin;' and they show the sense in which it is used. It is forgetting all the sinner's past misdeeds; his vile transgressions, and receiving him to your arms, as though he had never gone astray. Thus Jesus forgave Peter; the father forgave his prodigal son, and parents now forgive their repentant children. They blot out all their iniquities, and remember them no more. Instances of this nature occur daily in society. Hence God is said to have forgiven people, when he took vengeance on their inventions. And this is indeed so; for while in rebellion against his law, they had no communion with him; they did not look to him with love and hope; but they murmured against him saying, his ways were unequal. But when they were humbled and turned from their wicked ways, they could feel their acceptance with God, enjoy his worship, and hold sweet communion with him. This is forgiveness—It is deliverance from evil. It is salvation.

Again.—No punishment suffered by the sinner, can repair the injury done to the world. One sinner destroyeth much good. Who can tell the amount of evil which his transgressions cause? It is often said—'If a man is fully punished, there is nothing to be forgiven;' but is it so? Suppose a father has a virtuous, noble and promising son, whom he has established in business. Suppose too, that an artful, designing person, taking advantage of his inexperience, tempts him away from his

* Univ. Expos. vol. 1. art. by Rev. S. Cobb, on Punishment and Forgiveness.

business; leads him into vice, and wrongs him out of all he possesses, thus effecting a double destruction. Now a man thus guilty, may be justly punished; and he may repent, and bewail his sin in sackcloth and ashes; but he cannot repair the injury done. His suffering will not even restore the wayward son, much less wipe out his disgrace. Still, when the father discovers a thorough reformation in the man who has ruined his child, he may forgive him; he may blot out all his transgressions, and treat him as though nothing had occurred. Here we see how much there is to be forgiven, even though our punishment is not remitted. And yet, it is said, if we are punished for our sins, there is nothing to be forgiven. Such cannot realize the injury done by sin; that punishment does not repair the evil which they have caused; and that when they repent, God remembers their transgressions no more; that he blots them out from the book of remembrance, and receives them, though once rebellious enemies, to his arms of love, and his bosom of mercy. This is forgiveness. Viewed in this light, there is no contradiction in those texts, which speak of punishment and forgiveness. Both are true. We can be justly punished and still forgiven; because forgiveness is deliverance from sin, and blotting out our many transgressions.*

* 'The original word translated forgive in the New Testament, is *aphiemi*, from *apo*, from, and *iemi*, to send. To send away, dismiss, deliver from. It occurs in Matt. xiii. 36, and is rendered, sent away. 'Then Jesus sent the multitude away.' In Mark xv. 37, the same Greek word signifies to emit, or give up. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.' It is also used in 1 Cor. vii. 12, for putting away or dismissing a wife. 'If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. It also occurs in Matt. iv. 20. 22. and is rendered by the word left. 'And they straightway left their nets and followed him.'

This explains the language of our Savior. 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'* This does not mean that God is unforgiving, or harbors a revengeful feeling towards the sinner. To say this, would give to him the character of the wicked; whereas, he loves his enemies, and seeks their salvation. The language simply teaches, that while we continue sinful, we shall continue separated from God, and cut off from communion with him; but that whenever we will turn from sin, God will receive us. He ever stands with open arms, ready to welcome every returning prodigal. He is even waiting to be gracious; inviting, yea urging us to come. His table is spread, and all things are constantly ready. It is our sin, and our sin only, that separates us from God.

Such is the plain doctrine of Scripture on this subject. God has ordained that misery shall be the inevitable consequence of sin; but that whenever we will turn from sin, we shall be admitted to his favor; and all our iniquities shall be remembered no more against us.

It will avail nothing to bring the case of Ninevah against these views. The threatening against this city was, that in forty days it should be de-

This word in its substantive form occurs in Luke iv. 18. in the sense of 'dismission, deliverance, or liberty, as of captives.' 'He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Here the words deliverance and liberty are from the same Greek word that is rendered forgiveness, whenever this latter term is used in the New Testament." *Rev. S. Cobb on Punishment and Forgiveness.*

* Matt. vi. 14. 15.

stroyed, if the people continued impenitent. But they repented, and, therefore, did not incur the penalty. Hence there was no remission of punishment.

Neither will it avail anything to urge the prayer of David for the pardon of his iniquity.* No one can suppose that David thought himself sentenced to endless pain; and that he prayed to be delivered from that. The Old Testament is entirely silent on that subject; and, therefore, he had no such fears. Besides—David does not pray to have his punishment forgiven. The Savior commands us to pray—Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors—not forgive us the penalty which our transgressions have incurred—not remit our punishment. 'Pardon,' says David, 'mine iniquity'; not remit my punishment. Now we have seen what it is to pardon iniquity; it is to deliver from it; to forgive the evil which it caused; to receive to favor one who has disgraced himself. How much, then, had David to be forgiven? What need had he to beg for mercy? Hence we read: 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' *Abundantly pardon!* God remembers nothing against his children. They may have profaned his name; despised his law; abused his gifts; slighted his offers; but he pardons all, whenever they turn to him. It is not so with men; they lay up these things; they refuse to overlook past offences; they will neglect and despise those who have gone astray. The greatest criminal in the universe can receive a full pardon of God; but few among men

* Psalm xxv. 11.

can forgive the least offence. Who forgives the convict that comes from prison? He has suffered for his crime; but who forgives, even if fully satisfied that he is a new man? Alas for human nature! God alone abundantly pardons.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NATURE OF SALVATION.

In discussing the nature of salvation, it may be well to ask, first—What are the evils under which we are suffering, and to which we are exposed? The common opinion is, that we are exposed to God's vindictive wrath, and to a state of endless punishment. But we have seen that God is the infinite and unchanging friend of the sinner; and that the Scriptures nowhere speak of endless punishment.* Hence we do not need salvation from these, because not in any sense exposed to them. We ask, therefore, What are the evils from which we need salvation? The Scriptures give an explicit answer to this question.

1. They represent mankind as being ignorant, blind and deluded. 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Isaiah says, a vail is spread over all nations. Now there is but one way to cure ignorance, and that is, by imparting knowledge. Hence knowledge is put for salvation. Thus we read—'And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.' 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' 'It is written in the Prophets, that they all shall be taught of God.' 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the

* See chapters vii. and xii.

waters cover the sea.' Here we see that knowledge is put for salvation.

2. Mankind are represented as being sinful. Thus we read: 'All have sinned:' 'there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.' Sin is impurity. To save the sinner, therefore, he must be cleansed. Hence we read, that God 'hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;' and that 'Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.' It is sometimes called reclaiming the wanderer; reconciling the alienated; humbling the proud. Various figures are used to represent the evil under which we are laboring; but they are all included in the word sin. Therefore, the work of Christ is thus described: 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.'

3. We are all mortal, and must sooner or later go down to the grave. 'All flesh is grass.' 'Dust we are, and unto dust must we return.' There is, says Dr. Clarke, but one way to destroy death, and that is, by rendering mankind immortal. Hence Jesus is represented as the resurrection and the life. It is said he will destroy death; and that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Thus salvation is a salvation from ignorance, sin and death. When these evils are removed, all the causes of human misery will be removed; and there will be nothing to hurt or destroy in the whole empire of God. These include all evils, both external and internal.

From this view of our subject, it will be seen, that none are saved on earth in the full sense of the word. In the best of men there is much ignorance and sin. No man is perfect in knowledge or moral purity. Here we see through a glass darkly, and know in part. And hence if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. God, it is true, requires us to be perfect as he is perfect. This, however, refers not to degree but to kind; and signifies that we should be perfect after our kind. Absolute perfection in morals was never attained by man. To err, not only in judgment, but motive, is human. None ever lived, but what had occasion to say daily—'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors'—and 'God be merciful to us sinners.'

Temptations spring from the flesh.* 'Every

* Many suppose that temptations come from a personal being, called the devil, who was once an angel of light. The words of Peter and Jude (2 Peter ii. 4. Jude vi.) are thought to teach this. But the angels of which they speak, are thought to be chained in hell, or a place of endless wo. How then could they be on the earth? The word angel signifies a messenger; but teaches nothing with regard to his nature. Ministers are called angels. See Rev. ii. 1. 18; iii. 1. 7. 14. Those angels, therefore, who fell, were doubtless unfaithful servants of God, bound in the chains of sin and unbelief. The word devil signifies an accuser and deceiver; but does not teach the nature of the deceiver. Satan signifies an opposer. Judas was called a devil, and Peter, satan. They were not said to be like the devil and satan; to have their spirit; but to be a devil and satan. The enemies of Christ are called the devil. See Rev. ii. 10. They are called satan. See Rev. ii. 13. If any doubt the origin of sin, let them consult the following texts. Matt. xv. 18. 19. Mark vii. 21. Rom. vii. 7–24. James

man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death.' The animal man exerts over all some wrong influence. None keep all their propensities in due subjection. Many, it is true, keep the animal man in a good degree of subjection. When they triumph in this way, they are said to be saved; when the animal has the ascendency, they are said to be in bondage, in prison, dead, and lost in sin. None, therefore, can be fully saved from all moral evil here. Add to this, the fact, that salvation includes redemption from death, and you will see that the work will not be fully accomplished, till this corruptible puts on incorruption. In the morning of the resurrection we shall be complete in the Savior; and join in the song of Moses and the Lamb, saying, 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.'

This view of our subject will enable us to see, in what sense we can save ourselves, or 'work out our own salvation.' By using all the means of grace; by attending faithfully upon the word of instruction; by taking heed to our steps, we can gain a knowledge of God and of his word; we can obtain a mastery over our passions and appetites. There is a special salvation, and a general or common one. Every believer is saved. It is the privilege of all to be saved now; to have love reign

i. 14. 15; iv. 1–7. Resisting the passions of our nature, is called resisting the devil. Unbridled passions are fitly called the devil, because they deceive us, and lead us to oppose what is good. Every man who has the least knowledge of himself, knows perfectly well whence his temptations spring; and that he can account for all his evil deeds, without supposing a fallen angel has any influence over him whatever.

within them; and the chains of sin broken. To produce this special salvation, is the leading object of the gospel. Hence it is called the ministry of reconciliation, and said to save those who believe it. How important, then, that we improve aright our religious privileges, and seek for salvation, that we may have the peace which flows from the Gospel, and enjoy by faith the glories that await us after death. Eternal salvation is a free gift. In this sense, we are saved wholly by free and unmerited grace. This salvation none can work out for themselves. It is God that saves with an everlasting salvation. Merit here is wholly out of the question. Many I know have much to say about works. But work as faithfully as we may, and we cannot merit all we enjoy here. Nothing we do can benefit God. All he requires is for our good. And yet we talk of meriting heaven; of being saved eternally by our works. Franklin well remarked, that the man who should expect a large plantation for giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty traveller, would be reasonable, compared with him who should expect heaven for his good works. Heaven! How full of meaning the word! It is infinite plenty; infinite joy; immortal life. It is all that a God of inexhaustible riches could provide for his children. And yet, it is supposed to be merited by frail, sinful man!! Those who believe this, admit that our works are nothing; that our righteousness is as a filthy rag. But still with this they purchase heaven!!

Such is salvation. It is deliverance from ignorance, sin and death. It is to be taught of God; sanctified by the truth, and rendered immortal.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN.

In this chapter, the attention of the reader is to be invited to some of the arguments in favor of universal salvation. I regret that my limits will not allow me to do justice to this great subject. A volume like this, would not exhaust what might be said in its defence. All I can do, is merely to give a specimen of the arguments on which we build our glorious hopes.

1. All men will be saved, because salvation was prepared for them before the world began. This is taught in the most distinct manner. 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.'* Here we see a fixed arrangement in regard to salvation. This is precisely what we should expect of a God infinitely wise and good. He would not create beings without making ample provision for their welfare, and securing those provisions to them forever. Hence this salvation is said to be *made manifest* by the mission of Christ. Terms of the

* 2 Tim. i. 9. 10. 11.

same import are often employed. 'Hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' We cannot manifest or bring to light that which has no existence. The morning could not bring to light the beauties and glories of the enchanting landscape, did they not exist before the rising of the sun. Neither could the Sun of Righteousness, as he rose from the grave, have brought life and immortality to light, had they not existed before his resurrection. The office of Jesus then, was not to create heaven, but to reveal it, that he might enrich and beautify this world with the treasures and splendors of the next. Hence he is called a Witness. Thus we read—'Behold I have given him for a Witness to the people.'* Now the office of a witness is to state the truth; to reveal facts. Hence Jesus bore witness to God's rich provisions of grace; to that eternal salvation which he had prepared for the world. This was the great purpose of his mission. 'To this end,' he says, was I born; and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' The same idea is thus expressed. 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.'† A deed or record makes known our title to an estate. The record God has given, makes known our title to eternal life. Hence those who deny that all have this life, are said to make God a liar. That is, they deny the truth of his record, and accuse him of stating a falsehood. This denial, we know, will not alter the truth; it will only deceive men, so that they may disbelieve

* Isai. lv. 4. † 1 John v. 10. 11.

for a season. Therefore, we read—'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.'* The record possessed by the christian here, is an assurance that he is destined to a glorious inheritance hereafter, which he will have when the purchased possession, or the world for whom Jesus died, are redeemed. This inheritance is said to be held in reserve. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.'† 'We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.'‡

Such is the inheritance which God has secured to his children. This inheritance was prepared and secured according to the purpose of God. 'Not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose,' &c. This agrees with the great object of creation. 'Thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure, they are, and were created.' What would it avail for God to create for his pleasure, unless he has provided means to have his pleasure accomplished? Hence when he created, he prepared and secured salvation for his children. Thus, we see one great leading purpose running through all the divine works, to which everything has reference, and to the accomplishment of which everything is tending. It is certain, therefore, that all men will be saved.

2. Salvation will be universal because of grace. 'Not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and *grace* which were given,'

* Eph. i. 14. † 1 Peter i. 3. 4. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 1.

&c. 'This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life.' 'Wherefore I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of his power.'* These passages teach that works have nothing to do in effecting eternal salvation. Not according to works, but according to grace. By grace we understand 'the free and eternal love and favor of God, which is the spring and source of all the benefits, which we receive from him.' This is the 'original mover in our salvation, and hath no cause above it, to excite or draw it forth.' Hence it is said, that Jesus by the grace of God tasted death for every man.† Through this grace he came into the world to save sinners.

> 'Grace first contrived the way
> To save rebellious man;
> And all the steps that grace display
> Which drew the wondrous plan.
>
> 'Grace all the work shall crown
> Through everlasting days;
> It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
> And well deserves the praise.'

Now if salvation be of grace, and grace be infinite, what can hinder the salvation of all? Do you answer sin, I reply, salvation is *not according to works.* Therefore, it will be just as extensive as grace. So far as admission to endless glory is concerned, the saint and the sinner stand on a perfect level. Let me not be misunderstood. Religion is the greatest of all blessings which we can enjoy on earth; and sin the greatest of all curses we can endure. But still, religion does not entitle us to heaven as a reward. The greatest saint that goes up to glory, will go up as purely by grace, as the greatest sinner. Am I asked, how the un-

* Eph. iii. 7. † Heb. ii. 9.

believer, the hardened sinner, the bold blasphemer is to be saved, I answer, just as Paul and Peter and John are saved—*by grace*—'By grace are ye saved.' I know it is thought, grace can save little sinners; but not such as we have described. What says the apostle? 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'* Did Paul find salvation? Then all sinners can be saved, and the work of redemption be universal, for he calls himself the chief of sinners. We need not enlarge, for grace is certainly impartial; and as salvation is purely the work of grace, that also must be impartial.

3. All mankind will be saved, because Christ says, he will draw all men unto himself. His language is—'And I if I be lifted up from the earth *will draw* all men unto me.'† Now were there no other argument in favor of universal salvation, this would be entirely sufficient to establish the doctrine beyond refutation. In saying this, I have no reference to the promise here made to save, though this establishes the doctrine. I refer simply to the means employed to accomplish the work. Jesus will display his goodness, he will draw sinners by the cords of love. Terror may alarm and overwhelm in the billows of despair, but it cannot call forth affection and love. Man never seeks to convert an enemy by a display of all the wicked principles of his nature. This would alienate him still more. Hence when all know the Lord from the least to the greatest, they will be drawn to Christ; none can know him without loving him. There is, it is supposed, an allusion here, to a fable among the ancients. 'Jupiter, they said, had a chain of gold, which he could at any time let down

* 1 Tim. i. 15. † John xii. 32.

from heaven, and by it, draw the earth and all its inhabitants to himself. By this chain, the poets pointed out the union between heaven and earth; or in other words, the government of the universe by the extensive chain of causes and effects. It was termed golden, to point out not only the beneficence of the Divine Providence; but also that infinite philanthropy of God, by which he influences, and by which he attracts all mankind to himself.' The Savior hath this golden chain of love. One end is fastened to the throne of God, and when he shall have embraced the world, he will link the other to the same throne. Thus all will be drawn to God.

4. The Scriptures expressly declare, that all shall be saved. Thus Christ is called the Savior of the world.* How can he be the Savior of the world, without saving it? The usual answer is—He offers to save it. But the Scriptures do not say—We have seen him ourselves, and do know that this is indeed the Christ, who offers to save the world; but they say, Who is the Savior of the world. There is a wide difference between offering to do a work, and doing it. When the physician stops the ravages of a burning fever, and saves his patient from death, we understand, that he has actually cured him, and not offered to do it; and unless he effects a cure, none consider him a savior of the patient, however great and numerous his offers may be. So it is with Jesus. If he only saves a part, he cannot be considered the Savior of the world. I know it will be said, he places all men in a salvable state; he takes away the effects of Adam's sin, and places them on the same ground they were before the fall. But this is not saving; it is only making it possible to be saved. We have

* John iv. 42. 1 John iv. 14.

yet, however, to learn, the evidences of this position. We have, it is true, heard much said respecting it; but assertion, with us, is no proof. We want a thus saith the Lord. But this half-saving system, has one serious defect which we cannot refrain from considering. When we say one defect, we do not mean it has only one; but we speak of this one, because it is a defect contrary to what we all know to be the fact. The system says all are in a salvable state, and that Christ is the Savior of the world, because he offers salvation to all. But this cannot be; the heathen have never had the offer of salvation—not one-fourth part of the world has ever heard of Christ. Admitting, therefore, that Christ is the Savior of the damned in hell, providing they had the offers of salvation, it cannot be said he is entitled to the appellation of a universal Savior. Thus this popular theory is opposed to what we all know; and, therefore, we must conclude, that Jesus will save the world, that is, redeem it from all iniquity.

This agrees with St. Paul's representation of the work which he will accomplish. He says—'And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that

as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' Here we see that the free gift unto justification, is as extensive as the judgment unto condemnation, and that through the obedience of one, the many shall be made righteous, which through one man's disobedience, were made sinners. Hence with Doctor Clarke, we can say, 'As extensively, as deeply, as universally, as sin, whether implying the act of transgression, or the impure principle from which the act proceeds, or both;—hath reigned, subjected the whole earth and all its inhabitants; the whole soul, and all its powers and faculties, unto death, temporal, of the body, spiritual of the soul, and eternal of both; even so, as extensively, deeply, and universally, might grace reign, filling the whole earth, and pervading, purifying and refining the whole soul; through righteousness, through this doctrine of free salvation, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the principle of holiness transfused through the soul by the Holy Ghost; unto eternal life, the proper object of an immortal spirit's hope, the only sphere where the human intellect can rest, and be happy in the place and state where God is; where he is seen AS HE IS; and where he can be enjoyed without interruption in an eternal progression of knowledge and beatitude; by Jesus Christ our Lord, as the cause of our salvation, the means by which it is communicated, and the source whence it springs. Thus we find that the salvation from sin here, is as extensive and complete as the guilt and contamination of sin; death is conquered, hell disappointed, the devil confounded, and sin totally destroyed. Here is glory to Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father, to whom be glory and domin-

ion for ever and ever, Amen! Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Amen, and Amen.*

5. The scriptural use of the word gospel teaches the salvation of all. The gospel is a message of infinite love and grace. It is called the gospel of peace, because it proclaims the end of all war and misery, and the universal reign of love and happiness. It is called the gospel of salvation, because it reveals the salvation of all men through Jesus Christ. It is called the gospel of the grace of God, because it reveals the unsearchable riches of divine grace. Besides—This strong language, descriptive of its nature, there are the qualifying terms, used to express its excellency. Thus we read, 'of good tidings of good;' 'glad tidings of great joy;' 'of exceeding great and precious promises;' 'of a more excellent ministry.' Now when we consider, that the word *gospel* signifies good news, these qualifying terms become expressive beyond the reach of thought. Let us connect them together. They are *good, great, excellent, glorious, glad, blessed, exceeding precious.* What other epithets could be employed, to set forth the gospel, in a more engaging light? I have only room to illustrate one. Take *good tidings of good.* There may be bad tidings of good things; good tidings of bad things; good tidings of good things. For instance—Suppose the scheme of salvation is impartial. This is good. But suppose we hear, that notwithstanding its impartiality, it will save only a few—this would be bad news—so that we should have bad news concerning a good thing.

Again.—Suppose we should hear, that God is vindictive; this would be bad. But suppose we should hear, that Christ had appeased this wrath; this would be good news, so that we should have good news concerning a bad thing. Again.—

* See Clarke on Romans.

Suppose God has made provision for the salvation of all—this would be good. Suppose we hear, that this provision will be effective—this would be good—so that we should have good news concerning a good thing. Here then we have some idea respecting the import of these qualifying words. They not only show that the gospel is a scheme of infinite mercy, boundless grace and almighty power; but that it will triumph over sin, death and hell, and exalt all to the right hand of God, where there are pleasures forevermore. Thus salvation is universal.

6. The economy of God proves the salvation of all. This economy is characterized by goodness, consistency and uniformity. It must be characterized by goodness, for God is infinitely good; by wisdom, for his understanding is infinite; by uniformity, for he is without variableness or the shadow of turning. Such being the characteristics of this economy, how are we to account for the creation of a hell, and man's exposure to it? Goodness could not dictate this, for goodness cannot do evil.*

Again.—It is equally opposed to the consistency of that economy. Look at it a moment. One of the first works of Deity is thought to have been the creation of hell—a place which has been thus described:—

> 'Wide was the place,
> And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
> Beneath, I saw a lake of burning fire
> With tempest tost perpetually, and still
> The waves of fiery darkness 'gainst the rocks
> Of dark damnation broke, and music made
> Of melancholy sort, and overhead
> And all around, wind warred with wind, storm howled
> To storm, and lightning, forked lightning, crossed,
> And thunder answered thunder, muttering sounds
> Of sullen wrath.'

* See p. 202.

No sooner was this place created, and furnished with all the means of misery, than God began to form plans to save his people from it. For this purpose, he raised up prophets and apostles, and sent them forth to preach his word. For this he clothed his Son with human nature, and doomed him to die on the cross. For this he worked miracles; sent forth armies; raised up kingdoms; destroyed nations; clothed himself in terror, and employed every measure which his wisdom could devise. Now wherein is the consistency of all this? If God did not desire the endless ruin of man, why create a place for this ruin? Why not strike it out of existence, when it costs so much to save people from it; and when with respect to millions, all the exertions used are powerless? Why seek to defeat with one hand, what he labors to accomplish with the other?

Again.—The doctrine in question destroys the uniformity of God's economy. If we look at man, as situated in this world, we see him exposed to no unnecessary evils. All those to which he is subject, grow out of his nature, the imperfection of his wisdom, the passions essential to his existence on earth. We see too, that these are necessary to the discipline of his mind; to make him the subject of a moral government; to render him susceptible of study, thought and improvement.—They can all, therefore, be reconciled with a wise and good design; with a perfect system which shall end in man's highest welfare. Now the creation of a hell stands directly opposed to this economy; for this is an extraneous evil, an unnecessary evil—and one which is no advantage to God, no pleasure to the redeemed, and no service to the damned.

Here then, you have two systems of economy—one working for a good end, and the other for a bad end. Now is God divided? Is he mutable? Is

he partial? Is he cruel? If not, he has but one system, and that is uniformly good. That too is pursued in all the arrangements of his wisdom; the operations of power, and the administrations of justice. What he wills, he purposes; what he purposes, he promises; what he promises he sends his Son to accomplish. Every thing in this system points to a centre. It has laws, penalties and judgments; provisions, offers and decrees; warnings, exhortations and rebukes; but they are all parts of a perfect system; links in a vast chain, embracing the whole race of man.

7. The agreement between the natural and moral government of God, proves the salvation of all. We should be glad to consider many points of this agreement; but we have room for only three. Notice first, the inexhaustible fulness of nature. You see this in all its departments. What can exhaust the light of the sun? It shines with the same brightness, beauty and glory, when unnumbered millions bask in its beams, as when only one enjoys its light and heat. It has the same fulness now that it had when first hung up in the heavens; and when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted aloud for joy. Nothing can exhaust its fulness. It is the same with regard to the fountains of water. They continue to send forth, age after age, and generation after generation, their pure streams, sparkling with life. The rivers are ever rolling in majesty and beauty; and the ocean is ever heaving and foaming in its eternal fulness. But this gives only an imperfect idea of the treasures of nature. What emotions of gratitude fill the heart, as we look at the meandering rivulet which supplies the wants of man and beast, as it flows peacefully and silently along through the channel which heaven has provided; but how is wonder added to this grati-

tude, when we learn, that in every drop of water, there are myriads of beings sportive and happy, who are all fed from the hand of God!—The same emotions of gratitude fill our hearts, when we look abroad upon creation; and see the lofty mountain, the beautiful valley and the wide-spread plain, all loaded with bounty; but how are we astonished at our Maker's resources, when we learn that in every grain of sand, and in every leaf of the forest, there are worlds encircled within worlds, all teeming with life, and crowded with plenty! Our emotions are still deeper, when we contemplate the whole system of nature; the regular return of the seasons; the varieties of heat and cold, and all the causes which contribute to the supply of our wants; but how are we lost in wonder when we reflect, that this mighty world is, comparatively speaking, but 'a grain of sand, on the high field of immensity!' Thus in every department of nature, there is an inexhaustible fulness. Now can we believe that while God thus supplies the temporal wants of all his creatures, he has not made ample provision for the supply of all their spiritual wants? Is there an infinite sufficiency of natural light, food and water; but an insufficiency of spiritual light, food and water? Is God more careful of the body, than of the soul? Has he more regard for a worm, than for the immortal mind?

Again.—Every arrangement of nature is for the happiness of man. Wisdom and power have in all things acted with an unvarying regard to man's good. The stars which are forever singing as they shine, sing of boundless goodness and love. The sun, as he rises from behind the mighty waters, and throws his golden splendors over the earth, declares that for man he imparts his light and heat. The same benevolent design is

written on every department of the universe. Indeed, when we walk abroad amid the beauties of nature, and are fanned by the gentle breeze, invigorated by the healthful air, and charmed by the music of the groves, we never think of asking whether they were all made for our comfort and good; we enjoy them in gratitude, and feel to bless God for his rich and varied provisions of love. We see that our happiness is the point at which terminates every line in the great circle of Providence; that for us the sun shines, the waters flow, the rains fall, the winds blow, and the earth yields her abundance. Now is the same goodness displayed in the moral world? Is every thing in the scheme of grace, designed solely for man's good? Much is said by the advocates of endless suffering about God's glory; but his glory, as displayed in the universe, consists in seeking the interests of all. Now has he a different glory in his moral government? Has God in the arrangement of his natural laws, been more mindful of man, than in his spiritual laws? The natural sun shines with equal splendor upon all; and gilds with the same radiance the home of the heathen that it does the home of the christian. Now is the Sun of Righteousness to shine only on a few?

Again.—The laws of nature are all perfect. You see not one in all the works of God, clashing with another. From the mightiest planet, which performs with unvarying order its stupendous revolution, down to the smallest particle of matter, we tread beneath our feet, all is order and harmony. God has so fixed his various laws, that not only every planet moves in its appointed orbit; but that every particle of matter keeps in its appointed place, and fills the office to which it was ordained. Thus in all the divine works, not only in the worlds and systems of worlds above us; but

in those around us and within us, all is perfection. No law in all the universe is defeated. The sun answers the design for which it was placed in the firmament. The snow, and the ice, and the chilling wind, may for a season resist its heat; but it is only for a season. So the snow and ice of the heart, may for a while resist the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; but it will finally triumph; and the heart will become fresh with virtue under its genial influence. Now is the moral government of God less perfect than his natural? Will all the laws of the material universe answer the end for which they were designed; and the great proportion of his moral laws fail?

With these three characteristics of nature in view, let us turn to the Scriptures. Their language is—'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and drink of the rivers of thy pleasure.' 'I will abundantly bless her provisions, and satisfy her poor with bread.' 'That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' 'Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' Now what terms could be employed to denote a greater fulness than these? We see here, not only an infinite plenty, but an infinite plenty of the richest blessings! Look again into the Scriptures. 'As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass

* Isai. lv. 10. 11.

from the law, till all be fulfilled.† Here the perfection of the law is distinctly stated, and its complete success fully asserted. As all the laws of nature are perfect, and answer the purpose designed, so shall God's word be; it shall accomplish all his pleasure, and prosper in the thing whereto he sent it.

Many would persuade us to believe, that this is a superficial view of the subject, and that when we look deeply into christianity, we shall see the error of this reasoning. But has the philosopher, in any of his discoveries, found principles against this? Has the astronomer, in any of his discoveries, found anything adverse to this? All know, that the further they have pushed their inquiries, the more have they seen of wisdom and goodness, of the monuments of skill and power. And is it otherwise in the gospel? Are there bitter, malignant and cruel principles secreted within, which will finally break forth, like the burning craters of Etna? If so, where is the analogy between nature and revelation? It is gone—gone forever; and the prophet was mistaken, in comparing the word to the operation of nature's laws. Hence as in nature so in grace—the further we push our inquiries, the more do we see of goodness, wisdom and power; and after we have explored all that human reason can grasp, we must still say—*Lo these are parts of his works, and how little a portion is heard of him!*

Thus the salvation of all men is certain, or no confidence can be placed in the testimony of God.

8. All men will be saved, for this is the general voice of Scripture. To convince every reader of this, I have only to give a few specimens of its general language. These we will give under the

† Matt. v. 18.

different words, by which the work is set forth. 1. *Saved.* 'Mayest be my salvation, to the ends of the earth.' 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God.' 'The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.' 2. *Redeemed.* 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, according to the riches of his grace.' 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' 3. *Ransom.* 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.' 'Even as the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.' 4. *Return.* 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion.' 5. *Reign.* 'He shall reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' 6. *Subject.* 'And when all things shall be subdued.' 'Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.' 7. *Reconcile.* 'Who hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.' 'Reconciling the world unto himself.' 8. *Know.* 'All shall know me from the least even unto the greatest. 'All shall be taught of God.' 9. *Turn.* 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord.' 10. *Bow.* 'Unto me every knee shall bow.' 'That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.' Such are the words by which this work is described. The reader will observe too, the positive form of expression. The inspired writers do not say *may* be saved, but all *shall* be saved, thus showing that the work is certain of being accomplished; that the result of God's government is unalterably fixed in his counsels.

Again.—It may be well to consider the comprehensive expressions by which this work is taught. 1. *World.* 'That taketh away the sin of the world.' 2. *Whole world.* 'But also for the sins of the whole world.' 3. *All nations.* 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed.' 4. *All kindred.* 'All the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.'

5. *All flesh.* 'That he might give eternal life to as many (all flesh) as thou hast given him.' 6. *Every tongue.* 'Every tongue confess, that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' 7. *All things.* 'Of the times of the restitution of all things.' 8. *Every creature.* 'Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.' 9. *All men.* 'The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' 10. *Every one.* 'In turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' 11. The *whole creation.* 'Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now.'

Again.—Let us consider some of the reasons why this shall be done. 1. We are the property of God. 'All souls are mine; and mine are thine.' 2. God is the Governor. 'For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations.' 3. God wills it. 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth.' 4. God has purposed it. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' 5. God has promised it. 'Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' 6. Sin is not of God. 'For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought.' 7. Virtue is of God. If this work 'be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.' 8. All fulness is in Christ. 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' 9. Christ has all

power. 'All power in heaven and in earth is given him.' 10. Christ has all wisdom. 'He is made unto us wisdom, sanctification and redemption.'

Again.—The Bible should be so explained as to harmonize with God's perfections. If this be done, it is impossible to deny that universal salvation is a scripture doctrine. We have room to consider only one text in connection with goodness, wisdom and power. 'And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.'* Here is a revelation of infinite goodness. Such a provision is just what we should expect from this attribute; for if infinite, it would not only make provision for all, but make ample provision. The next verses give a revelation of wisdom and power. Let us read: 'And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.' Here we have a revelation of wisdom and power. Goodness provides, wisdom plans, and power executes. And hence the prophet teaches, that all will partake of the feast for whom it was prepared. He teaches this in the same terms he teaches that it was prepared for all. God allows nothing to waste. True, he can create without exertion, but still, he will have nothing lost; and especially, when millions of his children are perishing for the want of what is wasted. Therefore, God has not only made provision, but he has devised the way and means to bestow it upon his children.

* Isaiah xxv. 6.

Thus, if the Bible be true, God 'is the Savior of all men.'

9. All men will be saved, because such are the ties that bind mankind together, that it is impossible for any to be happy, while they see a fellow being in excruciating misery. It will require but little argument to sustain this position; we all have hearts full of tenderness and love; hearts which yearn at the sight of misery, and shudder at the thought of endless wo. It matters not what may be the character of those we see in wretchedness; they may be thieves and robbers, murderers and pirates; still our hearts bleed at every pore, when we see them suffering the consequences of their transgressions. The child that wanders from home in the labyrinths of sin and folly, is still beloved by its mother; has still a place in her warmest affections, and is to her the same being, which in infancy she pressed to her bosom, and caressed with inexpressible delight. And think ye, that any child could be so far gone in wickedness, that the mother would have no desire to restore him; that she would not use every effort, and make any sacrifice to bring him back? Every reader will answer no. And yet, there are those, who think, that God, the fountain of all that is kind and good in man, and whose goodness is a boundless ocean, while ours is a mere drop, will not restore his children, when he has the wisdom and power so to do! But such an idea is directly opposed to our sympathetic nature. No stream can rise higher than the fountain; and as no man can be reconciled to endless suffering, it is the height of absurdity to say God will inflict it.

It is our nature to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. The more we have of the spirit of religion, the more we have of this christian sympathy. Hence when we are

perfected in love, the sight of misery will be infinitely more painful than it now is. The mother who should see her son expiring upon the gallows, would be far more miserable, than a stranger, because her love would be greater. Hence it is, that when God would express his affection for the world, he likens it to a mother's, and says—'Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea,' he replies, 'she may forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord.' And yet, we are daily told that God will forget.

A few years since, the prison at Auburn, N. Y. was discovered, at the hour of midnight, to be enveloped in flames. The citizens flew to the relief of the convicts; and among those who went, were the professors and students of the Theological Seminary of the place. The devouring element was raging with increasing fury, and it was soon perceived, that the prisoners must either be released, or destroyed by the fire. Then of course was the time for human sympathy to assert its power; then creeds and confessions of faith were forgotten, and instantly the cry was shouted by one of the professors, 'Let out the prisoners—let out the prisoners;' and the same cry was echoed and re-echoed till every convict was released. And yet, these very men imagine, that when they shall be seated in a world of bliss, they can look down upon these same prisoners, and see them burning in a fire infinitely more dreadful than any of which we can conceive, and know that they are destined to remain in it forever and ever, and yet sing hallelujah, and praise God for securing their damnation. Possibly they are sincere in such professions; but unless they become demons, they will again raise the cry—'Let out the prisoners—let out the prisoners;' and this cry will be continued, until every

one shall be released. There cannot be rejoicing in heaven while one soul remains in hell. There might, it is true, be rest, but it would be such a rest as the shipwrecked father would experience, who, after being driven from cliff to cliff by the dashing waves, is saved just in season to see a son sink into a watery grave; or such a rest as the mother would experience, who is rescued from the devouring flames, just in season to see her loved infant perish in the greatest agony. But talk not of joy and rejoicing, while we know that one soul is in endless perdition. 'Likewise, joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.'* Thus the conversion of sinners is an event that increases the joy of heaven. And will not its joy be full? Shall the notes of the redeemed be dull and faint? Shall hosannas languish on their immortal tongues? But we need not enlarge. The doctrine of universal salvation is God's truth. It is founded upon the rock of ages, and will stand forever. It is the doctrine of nature, reason and love. If God is the governor of the universe, it is true; if he has infinite goodness, wisdom and power, it is true; if the Bible is his revealed word, it is true.

* Luke xv. 7.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RESURRECTION.

In speaking upon the resurrection of the dead, we should indulge in no speculations. Analogy and metaphysics can give us no light here. Our only source of information is the revealed word of God. We shall not, therefore, follow those writers, who have endeavored to prove it from nature; and who have indulged in vain reasonings about the way in which it will be accomplished. Our appeal will be to the Bible, and the Bible alone. The possibility of a resurrection none can doubt, who believe in the wisdom and power of God; and that he is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. The being that can create can raise from the dead. This he has done. Witness the resurrection of Lazarus; the widow's son of Nain; the saints that rose at the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ. In discussing this subject, there are two points, which claim our attention.

I. The number to be raised. And

II. The condition in the resurrection.

That all mankind are to be raised, is a fact so distinctly and fully taught, that we marvel any should ever have called it in question. St. Paul has placed this beyond all doubt. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he argues against the opinion, which it seems had been advanced by some of them, that mankind would not be raised.*

* See 1 Cor. xv.

And all the terms he employs show, most positively, that he taught the resurrection of all. Hear him. 'How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?' 'if so be that the dead rise not;' 'for if the dead rise not;' 'by man came also the resurrection of the dead.' By *dead*, he means here all the dead; all who have died or may die; he means all men. Hence he says—'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Thus the resurrection is just as extensive as the reign of death. This is evident from the comparison. *Even so*—that is, *all* die, and *all* shall be made alive.

This leads us to ask,

II. What will be man's condition in the resurrection? To answer this question, we must consider,

1. That Christ is the first fruits from the dead.* He is called the first fruits, in allusion to the Jewish custom, of offering to the Lord a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest. The figure teaches, that as the last fruit is of the same kind as the first, so man, when raised, shall be holy like the Savior. Hence, it is said—'If the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.'† By the lump and branches all men are intended; and therefore, as Jesus is risen, all mankind shall rise—rise to the same state of glory and blessedness, so that they shall ever be with the Lord.

2. The resurrection is spoken of as a cause of hope; as something for which all should hope. Thus, we read—'And have hope toward God which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.'‡ Now if the unjust were to be rais-

* 1 Cor. xv. 20. † Rom. xi. 16. ‡ Acts xxiv. 15.

ed to a state of ceaseless wo, how could Paul have hoped for their resurrection? We often expect evils, but never hope for them. Hope is a compound of desire and expectation; and therefore, when it is said—'I have hope towards God,' &c. it means, I both desire and expect the resurrection of the unjust, as well as the just. But how would it be with you, reader? Look around upon society, and see the wretched condition of the unjust. Poor and forsaken, degraded and despised, slaves to their passions and vices, some wander about without rest or peace; others drag out a wretched existence in a prison, or end their days upon a gallows. Now who can desire that such wretched beings should be raised to a state of misery, infinitely greater than any here endured? Who would not prefer to have them sleep on eternally in the darkness and unconsciouness of the grave? Remember, that our nearest connections may be among the unjust. How many a mother weeps over the waywardness of her daughter; and how many a father is grieved by the folly of his son? How many wives are broken-hearted, by the cruelty and licentiousness of their husbands; and how many children are doomed to behold their parents prostrated and ruined by vice? Now could they desire to see these unjust connections raised to misery? It is impossible; and therefore, Paul must have believed the unjust would be raised to glory.

3. The resurrection is spoken of as a source of comfort to those who mourn the loss of their friends. Death is constantly preying upon the children of men. No age, class, or condition, is exempt from his malignant power. Not only the aged and the vicious are cut down, but those in the midst of their days and usefulness; those in the morning of life, with the blossoms of promise clustering thickly

about them; and those who have just opened their eyes upon this fair world, and smiled to behold its beauties. Death spares no age; respects no rank, and pities no condition; and, therefore, among the vast throng that crowd our world, few are found, who are not mourners, who are not weeping over the loss of some near and valued friend! But the Apostle would not have us mourn like the heathen without hope; he assures us that there is a resurrection, that in the resurrection, we shall ever be with the Lord; and therefore, we should comfort one another.* There is only one way in which mourners can be comforted; and that is, by being assured that they will meet their friends again in a world where parting is unknown; where joy will be eternal and complete. To say that God will do all things right, only provokes the question, what will he do? what is right? And if we are told, to make an endless separation between friends, our hearts are not comforted; the cup which is presented to console us, contains the very dregs of bitterness and death! Therefore, the dead shall be raised to be ever with the Lord.

4. The Savior says, in the resurrection we shall be equal to the angels; we shall be children of God being children of the resurrection. Angels are holy and happy; and we shall be equal to them. Angels are immortal, therefore, it is said, we shall die no more. All this will result from being children of the resurrection. It is this that makes us children of God; children in the highest and most endearing sense; not children such as we are here,—corrupt, wayward, and ignorant, but holy and glorious, children like those pure spirits that minister before his throne!

5. The resurrection introduces us into the king-

* 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

dom of endless blessedness. To show the Corinthians the change which must be experienced in passing from this world into the resurrection, the Apostle said,—Flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God; neither could corruption enter it. Hence he says—'Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.'* Here we see, that in being changed from mortality to immortality; from corruption to incorruption, we are introduced into the kingdom of God; we are raised into heaven, the holy habitation of God. Thus every one that is raised, is raised into the kingdom of immortal glory.

6. We shall all be equal in the resurrection. 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Here is no distinction; some are not made happy, and others miserable. Again—'So also, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.'† Thus all are alike; all equally honorable, glorious and happy. We shall be equal to the angels; and are not they all happy?

7. The resurrection is spoken of as a victory over death, the grave, and sin. In the resurrection death will be destroyed; we shall be incorruptible and immortal. Dr. Clarke has well said, 'Death cannot be destroyed by there being simply

* 1 Cor. xv. 51—53. † 1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

no farther death; death can only be destroyed and annihilated by a general resurrection; if there be no general resurrection, it is most evident that death will still retain his empire.' The same remarks will apply to the grave. We can only triumph over this by a resurrection. To stop the work of consigning to the grave, is no destruction of it—a general resurrection can alone destroy it.

But this is not all. The resurrection is a victory over sin. 'The sting of death is sin.' How true is this language of the apostle. What pains the heart like sin, when we are laid upon a dying bed? How does this sting goad those, who have given up their lives to iniquity! Reader! Virtue alone has power to disarm death of this sting. Death is to be destroyed. But how can this be, if some are to remain eternally under the dominion of its sting? Besides, while we suffer this sting, we are the subjects of the deepest sorrow; but the apostle teaches that in the resurrection, there will be no sorrow. See his application of the following expressive language. 'He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth.'* To this St. Paul refers, when he says—'Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written—Death is swallowed up in victory.'† Thus he applies the language of the prophet, 'He will swallow up death in victory and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces,' to the resurrection. But how can tears be wiped from all faces, if some are eternally under the dominion of sin? Again.—It is evident that the resurrection is a victory over sin; because when it takes place, Jesus will have subdued all his enemies. 'Then cometh the end,

* Isaiah xxv. 8. † 1 Cor. xv. 54.

when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* The subjection here spoken of is spiritual. Christ's warfare is against sin. He only gains a victory over his enemy, when that enemy becomes his friend. Therefore, God is all in all, when they are thus subjected.† But could he be all in the soul filled with sin? 'Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' To what a victory does the apostle here refer! Imagination in its most towering flight, can conceive of nothing so great. It is a victory over death; a victory over the grave; a victory over sin. It is a victory too, gained by the whole race of man; a triumph over every imaginable cause of human misery.

Consider for a moment the ravages of death. See it enter the dwelling upon which the sun of peace is shining with unclouded splendor, and convert it into an abode of darkness and misery. See it lay its palsying hand upon the young man coming forward in life under circumstances of peculiar promise, and in a moment he is gone. Hear it issue its stern decrees, and lay in the darkness of the grave, monarchs and princes, statesmen and divines, parents and children. Throughout the whole earth he rules with uncontrolled sway, hurrying one after another to the grave, with scarcely a moment's premonition.

Death cannot only thus prostrate, but the grave to which it consigns its subjects, holds them with an iron grasp in its cold embrace. Think of the countless millions of the great, the renowned, the honorable, the learned, and the good, now locked

* 1 Cor. xv. 24. 25. † 1 Cor. xv. 28.

in this prison, yielding a silent obedience to its power. There lay together, cold and motionless, the rich and the poor; the conquered and the conqueror; the grave and the gay. Now over this we gain the victory, through the resurrection; so that when clothed with immortality we can exultingly shout, thanks be to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider also the nature, extent and ravages of sin. Its reign has ever been universal. All men, in all parts of the world, civilized and uncivilized; all men of all ranks, high, low, rich, poor, ignorant and learned, have been subjected to its power. Throughout the whole broad earth, no bright and sunny spot has been found free from its ravages and violence. Even the lands of perpetual spring; of soft and balmy air, where the nipping frosts and chilling winds of winter are unknown, are loaded with its poisonous fruits. It is a plant which grows in all climes and seasons; which flourishes upon the mountain and in the valley, in storm and in sunshine. Not only so—it is mighty in strength. It sweeps over the world like a tornado, levelling with the dust all the barriers of human wisdom and strength. The mightiest minds of earth have been prostrated by its malignant power; armies marching forth in all the pride of military pomp and splendor, and before which kingdoms have crumbled, republics bowed in servile submission, and the world itself trembled in fear, have been cut down by the vengeance of its arm. Cunning and strength, malignity and cruelty, constitute the nature of this great enemy of man. What a triumph then, will be a victory over sin! What a cause of gratitude and thanksgiving to God!

Such is the triumph of the resurrection. Who can conceive of a victory to be compared with this? When an army fighting in defence of free-

dom and life is triumphant, its friends are filled with joy; but their joy is mingled with sorrow, for they reflect on the widows and orphans that are made; on the groans and agonies of those bleeding and dying upon the field of battle. In the victory of the resurrection, there is no cause of regret. This is a victory in which a world is redeemed and saved; in which all men triumph over every cause of human misery and grief! 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' It has been said, that the imagination of the poet never conceived a more beautiful figure, than the dove returning to Ararat with the olive branch of peace, gazing down upon her own shadow, and listening to the music caused by her own wings, as she passed over the still, solitary and measureless waters; but if that exceeds these in beauty, these exceed that in importance; for while the one teaches the salvation of Noah and his family, the others teach the salvation of a world, and their eternal triumph over all evil.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE UTILITY OF PREACHING.

The inspired writers uniformly attach the highest importance to preaching. 'Go,' says the Savior, 'into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' And his Apostle says, 'Necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.' But many can see no reason why such worth is stamped upon the ministry, if sinners are not exposed to endless wo, and their endless salvation does not depend upon preaching. They can see no evil in sin, only because it exposes to infinite pain; and no good in virtue, only as it gives a passport to glory. Were it not for these consequences, vice, they say, would be better than virtue. Hence we are so often asked, Why we support the ministry. So far as this objection relates to virtue and vice, it has already been answered; for we have shown that virtue is heaven, and vice hell.* But this is not enough; it is necessary that we should point out the ways in which it benefits. This we will do. And,

1. We are indebted to preaching for the support of the marriage covenant, which was instituted immediately after the creation of the first pair. 'Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.'† This covenant had the special sanction of the Savior. 'What, therefore, God

* See chap. xiii.

† Gen. ii. 24.

hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* Those united in marriage are joined by God, because he established the marriage covenant. Man, then, should not interfere with an arrangement made by the all-wise Creator. And yet, no sooner is the gospel rejected, than we see an open and unblushing hostility commenced against this covenant. 'It is detrimental to happiness; it is arbitrary,' say the advocates of infidelity.† They would have no law relating to marriage, but fancy, caprice or passion. But to see the consequence of destroying the marriage law, look at France. 'Soon after the revolution commenced, a law, permitting divorces, was passed by the national assembly; and in less than three months from its date, nearly as many divorces as marriages were registered in the city of Paris. In the whole kingdom, within the space of eighteen months, upwards of twenty thousand divorces were effected, and the nation sunk into a moral degradation, from the effects of which, it has not yet recovered.' This shows what would be the consequence, if the law of union were not made permanent; if 'divorces were granted on the ground of unsuitableness of temper, or occasional jars.' But if such would be the effect of a law like this, what would be the effect of carrying out infidelity, and abolishing the marriage covenant entirely? How soon would all society be destroyed, and universal licentiousness prevail! How soon would woman sink to the awful degradation from which she has been redeemed by the gospel! Will you say then, preaching is useless, when it is the only means of preserving the sanctity of the marriage covenant?

* Matt. xix. 6.

† Fanny Wright, now Darusmont, openly opposed the marriage covenant, in her first lectures in this country.

2. Consider the importance of having children religiously educated. Surrounded by sin, exposed to all its influences, they will inevitably become wicked, unless guarded in the most scrupulous manner, and every exertion is made to train them to habits of virtue. Leave them to the influences of the world, and we can have no reason to hope that they will be virtuous, useful or happy, but must look forward with the painful conviction to the time, when with a perverted moral sentiment, and a reckless disregard of the divine law, they will revel constantly in crime. Suppose now that all of the rising generation were thus neglected, how dark and fearful would be the cloud hanging over this nation! What confidence could we have in the prosperity and happiness of a nation, composed of those who neither fear God nor reverence his laws? But take away the ministry; let its instructing, warning, pleading voice be no longer heard, and the religious culture of our children would certainly be neglected. Parents would be ungodly. They would not read and explain the Bible to their children; they would not teach them to reverence the Sabbath, the name of God and his sacred institutions; they would not obey the command of Moses, to teach them the doctrines and statutes of God when they rise up, and when they lay down; when they come in and when they go out; they would not oppose their inclinations to vice and irreligion; they would not train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The Sabbath would be despised; the Bible forgotten; the temple of worship demolished, and a righteous God mocked. Sabbath schools, those nurseries of piety, where so many holy influences are brought to bear upon the tender mind, would all be destroyed. True, christianity might linger in the bosoms of its most devoted friends; but deprived of its chief

means of success, and its chief engine of power, its influence would be feeble, and all its efforts to train children for God unavailing. Our hope, therefore, is in the ministry.

3. The ministry is essential to the support of our free government. There is no knowledge so important to legislators as a knowledge of God and his laws. This will teach them the true theory of government; cause them to see that all men have the same natural rights, and ought to have an equal voice in making laws, and constituting the reigning power. God, in all his laws, seeks the highest good of his children. We never see him dooming one to servitude, and exalting another to honor; disposing of individuals, cities and nations, without any regard to their interests or abstract rights. Justice and goodness characterise all his dealings. Hence those legislators who choose God for their pattern, and copy after his laws, will have a sure guide. Our government was formed after the model of God's, so that we have not only the best government under heaven, but we have the true theory of government; and were it only carried out according to its foundation principles, liberty would be secured to all, and all would be treated with equal favor.

Again.—Preaching supports government by teaching a proper respect for the constituted authorities. The powers that be, are ordained of God; and, therefore, their laws, even though unjust and tyrannical, are not to be rudely assailed or contemptuously broken. A real christian, under a free government, can never be found in the ranks of rioters and lynchers, knowing that he who thus tramples upon law, strikes a death blow at the liberties of our country. The way to correct abuses is to spread knowledge, and remove, by the appointed provisions of the law, those who have

made these abuses. This is the uniform doctrine of the New Testament.

Again.—Preaching supports government by qualifying men to administer it. No one is so well qualified to fill an important and responsible office as a good christian. Faithful to his trust, he will not abuse the confidence reposed in him. A lover of justice, he will wrong no man. Clothed with dignity, he will command the respect of all who know him. Guided by the eternal law of his Maker, he will be above the 'dictates of unsanctified ambition, party feeling or state chicanery.' Men of this character should fill our courts of judicature; for if the fountains of justice are impure, the guilty may go unpunished, and the innocent be condemned. The christian judge, therefore, is the security of the good, and the terror of the wicked. He can neither be tempted by a bribe, nor blinded by self-interest; his aim, and his only aim, is righteousness.

Again.—Preaching supports government by rendering the people capable of self-government. Of how many nations has sin been the downfall. Why were Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh, Babylon and Jerusalem destroyed? Nations may be blessed with all the means of wealth; they may boast of the extent of their country, the beauty and grandeur of their cities, and the discipline of their armies; their forts may be impregnable, and their fleets victorious; they may have schools and colleges that shall send forth men eminently qualified for every station in life; but let them forsake the arts, trade and husbandry; let them give themselves up to luxury, feasting and drunkenness, and they must inevitably go to ruin. Take away a nation's honor, justice and virtue, and you take away all that can hold it together; you break down the great pillars on which it rests; you take

the heart from the body, and leave it without any of that internal structure necessary to life. Much is said about our glorious constitution. True, it is glorious; but still it is no guarantee of our perpetual liberty and independence. The constitution in the hands of those who have no regard for its principles, who are ripe for riot and licentiousness, is no more than the Bible in the hands of the infidel. All, therefore, depends upon keeping the people virtuous. Should the day ever come, when religion should be driven from our country, her laws scorned, her virtues despised and her instructions set at nought, our government could not survive another year; the constitution then would be a 'mere rope of sand.' All, under God, therefore, depends upon preaching. And hence, if we wish to have our government stand forever in all the permanency of wisdom, virtue and truth, we must support faithfully the ministry of Christ.

4. The ministry is the only means of saving the world from the horrors of idolatry. Infidels, I know, boast much about the light of nature; and yet, it is a fact, proved by all history, that a people without a revelation are sure of becoming idolaters. If any doubt this, let them show why idolatry has reigned over every portion of the earth, not enlightened by a revelation from God. I will not deny that nature reveals a God, that there is an essential and immutable distinction between virtue and vice; but I deny that the lessons of nature have ever kept people from idolatry or vice. Hence it is certain, that if we abolish the gospel, we should become enveloped in all the darkness of idolatry; we should forsake the worship of God, and bow before reptiles, beasts and birds; we should sacrifice our children on the altars of superstition to appease the wrath of our deities; widows would burn themselves on the fune-

ral piles of their husbands; we should torture the body for the good of the soul; we should adore lewd and drunken gods, and support our temples of worship by prostitution. We might not live to see these evils; but the moment christianity should be taken away, that moment our nation would begin its downward career, and its light and glory begin to give place to darkness and shame.

5. We shall see the utility of preaching by considering some of the evils which it seeks to destroy. Look for instance at profaneness. There are three kinds of profane swearers. 1. Those who think it gentlemanly. These include many of the vulgar; some who are truly gentlemanly in their manners, and many of those characterised by pertness and a showy dress. Gentlemen swearers often vie with each other in the use of their horrid and heart chilling oaths. 2. Those who swear in a fit of passion. There are many that never profane the name of God, except when angry; and then to hear their oaths, one would suppose they were educated among pirates. They can hardly find terms sufficiently blasphemous to give vent to their fury. 3. Those who swear from habit. There are many of this class. They acquired the habit when young, and perhaps of their own fathers, whose examples should have taught them to pray. Such tell us, they mean no harm; they speak before they think; they should be glad to reform. But if sincere in this, if they desire to reform, why do they continue the sinful practice?

Now against all these kinds of profaneness, preaching lifts up its stern voice of rebuke. It says in the strong commands of the Bible—'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.' 'Swear not at all.' Profaneness is contrary to every principle of the gospel. True,

it does not injure God; for nothing we do can either injure or benefit him; but it injures us; it produces an irreverence for the divine law, and the divine name. When we hear a man spoken of in contemptuous language, it lessens our esteem for his character, and injures him in our estimation. So profane swearing lowers God in our estimation, leads us to despise his law, and thus undermines the foundation of all virtue; for, destroy all reverence for God and his law, and you destroy all virtue. Let profaneness universally prevail, and there could be no society; 'the very name of religion would be blotted out from the earth; its forms abolished, its sanctions disregarded, its laws violated, virtue and piety annihilated, the flood gates of every evil burst open, and moral order entirely subverted.' Hence every friend of human good, should oppose profaneness.*

Again.—Lying is an evil which preaching seeks to destroy. The highest importance is attached to truth by all the inspired writers. God hateth a lying lip; it is an abomination to him. Truth is mentioned as one of the characteristics of God. 'He is a God of truth.' To see why such importance is attached to truth, we have only to consider, that most of what we learn is from the lips of our associates, and the instructions of their pen. Destroy, therefore, our confidence in their commu-

* What is more horrid than a profane oath? What more unnatural? I have even heard the profane reprove the profane! A bitter and vulgar enemy of Universalism has said—Universalists are not sincere, for when angry, thy swear orthodox oaths. If Satan will reprove sinners, let them listen. Let any professed Universalist, therefore, guilty of profaneness, take this rebuke to himself. If he has renounced the orthodox creed, let him cease from using orthodox oaths. Let us all speak our own language—the language of our own creed. Then our lips will no longer be polluted by profaneness.

nications; make us believe that all we hear and read is false, and we could have no guides or associates. We should know indeed, that the sun pours its light upon the world; that the vital air invigorates the body, and that the earth gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater; but this would be the full extent of our confidence and bliss. We could have no enjoyment in listening to professions of friendship, to offers of love, or tales of piety. We could have no satisfaction in reading the pages of history, or perusing the volume of inspiration. We could cherish no hopes of heaven, no anticipations of endless glory; because all confidence in the language of man would be gone.* This shows then, the necessity of truth, and what an evil lying is. And yet in how many ways do we contribute to the growth of this evil! In trade, in the common transactions of life, how do we prevaricate and deceive! But in all this, we take a course which leads to the destruction of all society; and which, therefore, must be bad. Now preaching aims to make all speak the truth; and were its ends fully answered, confidence would reign in all hearts; 'and a lustre and cheerfulness would be diffused over the face of the moral world, like the mild radiance of the morning after a dark and tempestuous night. Confidence would be restored throughout every department of social life; jealousy, suspicion and distrust, would no longer wrankle in the human breast, and unfeigned affection, fidelity and friendship, would unite the whole brotherhood of mankind. Society would move on with a beautiful simplicity, harmony and smoothness in all its transactions. Litigations would cease; numberless cares and anxieties would vanish, and

* See Dick's Philosophy of Religion.

the tribunals of justice would be purified from sophistry and deceit.'

We give the two foregoing evils as a specimen of those which preaching seeks to destroy. We should be glad to consider injustice, slander, tale-bearing, filthy communications, licentiousness, with many others, but our limits forbid. To see their evil, however, you have only to consider them universal, and then you will understand how they lead to the destruction of society. Just as far, therefore, as preaching tends to destroy these, it gives security and happiness to man, and promotes order and peace in the world. Preaching then, is indispensable to the existence of society.

6. We shall see the utility of preaching by considering, that human life is a journey. All along on this journey, there are intersecting paths, leading off into the ways of sin and folly. Preaching sets up way-marks to guard from being led astray; it places watchmen at every intersecting road to guide us aright; and it even sends along companions to cheer and guard and aid us on our way. Hence we read—'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' Suppose, reader, you have a long and dangerous journey to take, would you say an experienced, faithful guide and guard would be wholly useless? Suppose that all who take this guide and guard perform the journey with pleasure and entire safety; but that all who do not, meet with disasters and ruin; would you not then admit his importance? Well, all who listen to the instructions of the gospel, go through the journey with safety; while those who do not, wander from their path, and meet with innumerable difficulties. Religion has led thousands and thousands through life in perfect security. Among the millions she has guided, none have been involved in difficulty; none have found her

path unpleasant. She is not only a way-mark which directs in the right path; but a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. Who, then, will dispute the utility of preaching?

7. The figures employed to represent the duty of a minister, show the utility of the ministry. Take, for instance, the command, 'Feed my lambs.' Now, for what has God provided temporal food? Is it not for the comfort of his children here; that they may enjoy life, and have strength to perform its duties? For the same reason, then, he provides spiritual food; he does it, that we may be happy in life, and have spiritual strength to perform our duties. Thus the kingdom of grace furnishes food for the inner man, the same as the kingdom of nature for the outer man. Hence the gospel is called the bread of God, and the water of life. And hence it is said to lead in green pastures, beside the still waters. What more striking and beautiful figures could be employed to represent the value of the ministry?

8. That preaching is necessary, will be evident when we consider that it communicates God's truth. God has revealed no truth, that has not an important bearing upon our interests in life. Consider that truth makes us acquainted with God. Now, to be acquainted with good men, tends to mould us into their image. What, then, must be the effect of knowing God, who is infinite in goodness, and the 'standard of unspotted perfection'? Will it not change us imperceptibly into his image? And what can be a greater good than a moral likeness to our Maker? Again.—Truth inspires us with hope in the hour of adversity. There are many events in life, which are dark and mysterious. Sickness, disappointment, loss of friends, are the portion of all. Now, while ignorant of the truth, all these events seem like the workings of

chance. But when enlightened by the truth, we see them all working for good, so that beyond the clouds which hang over us, and the darkness which surrounds us, we behold sunny regions of bliss, where all is life, light and joy, just as we behold the sun gilding the distant mountain tops, as we look across the dark and rolling billows. Again.—Truth brings life and immortality to light. The prospect of Moses, when he ascended Mount Nebo to die, was magnificent beyond description. The land of promise spread out its romantic landscape at his feet, and he gazed upon its 'deep valleys and forest covered hills;' upon its 'rich plains and pastures;' its 'palm trees and rose gardens.' But what was this compared with a view of that heavly land, flowing with milk and honey, where the sun of peace forever shines, and the waters of salvation forever flow? Thus preaching reveals our heavenly inheritance, and fills us with hope as we go down to the grave. It gives us a foretaste of heaven. We have it in the peaceful influence of virtue; the sweets of devotion; the joys of hope, and the pleasures of love.

Finally, christianity is perfect, and in all things adapted to our nature. Now, just as much as we enhance the excellency of the gospel, do we increase the necessity of having it preached. The better the medicine, the greater the necessity for having it administered; the more useful the science, the more the necessity of having it taught; the more perfect the laws, the greater the importance of having them obeyed. All, therefore, who say preaching is useless, say that christianity is not adapted to our condition and wants. And who but an infidel dare say this?

CHAPTER XX.

REPENTANCE.

REPENTANCE is a subject which first claims the attention of every christian teacher; and has ever been the constant theme of all the inspired teachers. It was proclaimed immediately after the transgression; it was announced in the thundering voice of Sinai, and it dropped with peculiar energy from the hallowed lips of the Prophets, the Savior and the Apostles. All the divine communications which have been made to the world; all the descriptions given of God and the Savior, of virtue and vice, have been designed to lead men to repentance. And while we continue sinful; while we have appetites and passions, this call to repentance must be continued.

But what is repentance? What is the change required? In answering this question, let us consider—

1. The words rendered repent. There are two of these.* One signifies reformation, and the other

* The words are, μετανοεω and μεταμελομαι. Doctor Campbell says: 'It has been observed by some, and I think with reason, that the former denotes properly a change to the better; the latter barely a change, whether it be to the better or to the worse; that the former marks a change of mind that is durable, and productive of consequences; the latter expresses only a present uneasy feeling of regret or sorrow for what is done without regard either to duration or to effects; in fine, that the first may properly be translated into English, *I reform;* the second, *I repent*, in the familiar acceptation of the word.'

merely a change without fixing its character. For this reason, it has been thought that *metanoeo* should be rendered reform. Thus: 'Reform ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' According to this, repentance is reformation. Hence we infer that it is something more than sorrow. 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.' We ought to be careful, and distinguish between sorrow and repentance; for a man may shed over his transgressions the scalding tears of bitter regret, and still pursue his sinful course. 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance.' Sorrow precedes repentance; for no man will truly reform, till he feels his sins, and the necessity of turning from them. Again.—Repentance is not simply confession of sin. Some fancy if they openly confess their wrong, that they are new creatures; but a man may continue to sin and confess all his days, and grow no better. Again.—Repentance is not a rapturous feeling, a feverish excitement. It is generally thought that if we are greatly terrified, and become powerfully moved by affecting descriptions of death and hell, or the arts and tricks of a preacher, we are actually regenerated; and especially if hope succeeds this state of agony. But to see the error of this, you have only to consider, that thousands who are thus wrought upon, are not made more just, honest or kind, but continue to live in the practice of the worst vices of the earth. I do not say such excitements are evidences of wickedness; I only say, they are no evidences of goodness. Repentance, therefore, is reformation; turning from sin to holiness.

2. We can ascertain the nature of repentance by the manner in which it was preached. Thus John the Baptist said: 'Repent, [reform] for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' But this was not all; he proceeded to point out the various vices of those

he addressed; and so spirit-stirring were his instructions and rebukes, that the people came desiring to know what they must do. First came the self-righteous Pharisees, saying, What shall we do? Now they were uncharitable and oppressive; they had no sympathy with the poor and needy; with the widow and the orphan; but they would wring drops from their pittance, to increase their own abundance. Hence he said to them, just as we should say—'He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.'* Next came the Publicans, saying, What shall we do? Now these were the tax gatherers, who collected of the Jews what they paid into the Roman treasury; and who were in the habit of using their office for the purpose of unlawful gain. Hence he says—'Exact no more than that which is appointed you.' Next came the soldiers, saying, 'And what shall we do?' Living an idle life, and being poorly compensated for their services, they would naturally be restless and discontented, and fall into frequent disputes and contentions. Hence he says—'Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.' Now, if repentance were a change of nature, why did not John direct his labors to change the nature; why simply seek to rectify the errors of the people; to give to the covetous a heart of charity; to the tax gatherers a principle of honesty, and to the soldiers a spirit of contentment and peace? The Savior commenced his ministry in the same language used by John. But he did not stop here. Whoever will read his inimitable sermon on the Mount, or any of his discourses, will find him faithfully exposing sin, and inculcating virtue. Now, doing this, was

* Luke iii. 7–14.

preaching repentance. Many suppose repentance is not preached, except there is a constant repetition of the word. Hence sermons designed to point out the ruinous effects of vice, and the excellency of virtue; and, therefore, the necessity of turning to God, are often condemned as not calling sinners to repentance, when their whole object is to convert them from the error of their ways. Such must condemn our Savior's sermon on the Mount; for that does not contain the word repent, though it is all about repentance, and designed to redeem man from sin. Therefore, to repent is to reform.

3. We can ascertain the nature of repentance, by the figures chosen to illustrate it. Before introducing these, it may be well to observe, that repentance is commonly supposed to be a total change of our nature; and that before it takes place, it is thought we are totally corrupt, and are incapable of doing, thinking or wishing any good; that even a prayer to be converted is a sin sufficient to damn us eternally! Now do the figures used to illustrate repentance justify this idea? Take first, the figure, washing. 'Wash away thy sins.' 'Ye are washed.' 'That washed us from our sins in his blood.' Now this figure presupposes something naturally good in man, otherwise there is nothing to be cleansed; he is like the garment that has become a complete mass of filth. Besides, there is no change in the nature of a garment by the process of washing. We cannot convert an article into another kind of material. So in repentance. There is no change of nature; only a change of character. It is cleansing the heart, rectifying the powers.

Refining is another figure. 'He is like a refiner's fire.' 'He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.' Take a piece of ore, that is all alloy, and when refined nothing remains. This figure, then,

presupposes, that man has naturally good powers, which are capable of being restored to their proper use, just as refining separates the dross from the pure metal. Hence repentance is not a total change; neither is it a change of nature; for the ore experiences no change in its nature by being refined. We cannot take iron ore, and change it to silver or gold; for if we could, all would turn refiners. Thus repentance is simply purifying the heart—changing our moral character.

We will do all that is right here; we will appeal to those who profess to have experienced a total change of nature. They tell us they have to watch, and pray, and take heed to their steps, lest they fall away. But would it be so, if they had received new natures? Do we not see the old nature constantly acting itself out in envy, jealousy, unkindness, overreaching, fraud, and injustice? Change of nature! We have all understandings which can take cognizance of truths; consciences which can apply them; affections which are capable of becoming interested in them, and wills which can be subject to them.* These capacities constitute us human beings; they compose what is meant by our nature; and hence it is as fallacious to say, our natures must be changed, as to say, our physical powers must be changed. True, the understanding may be darkened, the conscience seared, the affections deadened, and the will obstinate; but all this does not alter our nature. We know this from the fact, that we are capable of loving our friends, and exercising the liveliest emotions of gratitude. How pure is the attachment which children feel for their parents. It is as far removed from every thing unholy, as the heavens from the earth. Well—Love to our

* See Ware on the formation of the christian character.

heavenly Father, is the same in nature, as love to an earthly father. Obedience to one is the same in nature, as obedience to the other. If not, why do the Scriptures choose the former to represent the latter? The difference then, between the penitent and impenitent, is not in their natures, but in their principles and motives.* This accounts for the warnings, and exhortations given to the penitent. Unless they are watchful, prayerful, and punctual in using all the means of grace, they are liable to fall from grace; their love will wax cold; sin will overpower their religion.

But here I shall be asked, how these views can be reconciled with such expressions as the following—'A new heart'—'new creature'—'born again?'† We shall be assisted in answering this question, by considering, that we are commanded to make to ourselves a new heart.‡ This we are

* In Matt. xviii. 3. Jesus says—'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' In the next verse he says—'Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' Thus conversion consisted in becoming humble. Pride and ambition were the sins here spoken of. Hence when a proud man becomes humble, and feels his dependance, he is converted. This proves that conversion is a change of feeling and desire.

† The phrase 'born again' may have allusion to the opinion entertained by the Jews, that as the natural descendants of Abraham, they were entitled to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. John refers to this in Luke iii. 8. To the same St. John refers i. 13. where he says, as it should be rendered, 'which were born not of any particular race,' &c. 'Therefore, Jesus said to Nicodemus, ye must be born again;' that is, you, being a Jew, will avail nothing; you must be changed as well as the Gentiles. But he asked, how can this be? (See John iii. 4.) To which Jesus replied, you must be born of water and of the spirit; that is, be baptized as a proselyte to a new religion, and be made anew by its spirit and doctrines.

‡ Ezek. xviii. 31.

to do, by casting away our transgressions, and turning to God.* Hence a new heart is a new principle of action; new feelings and desires. Indeed, what in some places is called putting on the new man; being created anew, is in others called ceasing to do evil; learning to do well; breaking off from our sins by righteousness, and our transgressions by turning unto the Lord. This is a new creation, because the man has new principles of action; new desires and hopes, and a new character. It is sometimes called quickened by the spirit; raised from the dead; coming forth to life; coming up out of the grave. It is passing from a state of sin, to a state of virtue.†

According to these views, repentance is turning from our vices. The intemperate repent, when they become temperate; the dishonest, when they act upon correct principles; the gamblers, when they leave their pernicious pursuit; and the profane, when they learn to reverence God. Such a change will be internal, as well as external. The heart is the seat of action; and while the heart is set on evil, the life will be unholy. Hence we have said that godly sorrow precedes repentance. A man must feel himself to be a sinner, or he will not turn to God for help. We would be the last to deny that repentance is an internal work. The only acceptable obedience is that which springs from an honest heart.

This explanation of repentance must be correct, because we are commanded to repent. This command is found on almost every page of the Bible. But is God unreasonable? Would he require impossibilities of his children? Would he call upon them to make to themselves new hearts, if conversion was a change of nature, and a change which

* Ezek. xviii. 27. 31. † John v. 21—30.

can only be produced by the irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit? Can we suppose there is anything miraculous in the work of conversion; that there is any supernatural influence exerted? The Bible says—'Being born again; not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.'* Here the new birth is ascribed to the word. In the verse preceding, it is ascribed to man. He is said to have purified his soul, in obeying the truth, through the spirit. There is no contradiction here. The word is said to do, what we do, when we follow its instructions, and are inspired by its hopes. So God is said to beget us unto a lively hope; but he does it through the resurrection.† Again—'Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth.‡. Thus we are converted by the word of God. This points out our sins, and directs us in the way of duty. This, therefore, converts us; or by this we convert ourselves. If there is any seeming contradiction in this, it will be explained by the following—'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.'‖ Here, both God and men are said to build the house; and such is the case when the builders are governed by religious principles, and a desire to advance God's truth. In the same sense, they convert themselves, when God converts them by his word. Now all these passages contradict the idea of a supernatural influence. Indeed, the word contains all that it is necessary for us to know; and why should God work miracles to teach us more? Is not the age of miracles past? Has God given any assurance of continuing his miraculous aid, till the end of time? Do you say the word of itself is powerless;

* 1 Peter i. 23. † 1 Peter i. 3. ‡ James i. 16.
‖ Psal. cxxvii. 1.

I answer, such is not the case; for the Apostle says, it is able to save the soul,* and that it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword.† If a supernatural influence is exerted, why is there such a difference of opinion among those who have experienced it? Why are some of one faith, and some of another? Why too are so many deceived with regard to that influence? Why do many who suppose they have felt it, so soon fall back again into the world? Why in some is it attended with shouting and jumping, and in others without any such extravagance?‡

Thus we are converted in the same way we are redeemed from any error in science or government; it is by the agency of truth; by obtaining knowledge. Here then, we see our duty; the necessity of reading the Bible; reading religious books; attending church, and employing all the means of grace. Hence the propriety of the command, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' Every sinner knows, that with the means of grace which have been provided, he can turn to God. It is but just, therefore, that we

* James i. 21. † Heb. iv. 12.

‡ 'In the style of scripture, all good moral influences are referred to the Spirit of God. This Spirit, the invisible energy by which God is drawing men to goodness, is around us as well as within us. It does not merely operate upon the mind, indirectly imparting light and strength; its power is to be felt in the works and providence of God, in our natural sentiments of right and wrong, in the events of life, and in all the truths, which revelation makes known to us. It is to be acknowledged in whatever enlarges our conceptions of duty, raises our affections, gives us strength to resist temptation, or animates us in any good purpose. In the passage before us, our Savior, I conceive, had particular reference to the truths and motives of christianity, as the means which God was employing to effect the moral renovation of men; and to those direct influences upon the mind which, as we believe, accompanied the reception of the christian faith.'—*Prof. Norton.*

should suffer the consequences of impenitence; that if we abuse our agency, and slight the proffered mercy, we should be miserable. This misery will last while we continue impenitent. There is no way to escape it, except through the gate of repentance. Hence the Bible points us to the stings of conscience; to the degradation of sin; to its shame, poverty, guilt, regret, and premature death, that we may be persuaded to repent. But while it points to these evils, evils full of terror and horror, it is silent respecting endless evil. To the Jews, Christ said, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;* that is, perish by some fatal temporal judgment, as did the Galileans whom Pilate destroyed, and the eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell. In this way, they did perish; they experienced a temporal destruction for their impenitence. Jesus threatened the same upon Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum; they were exalted to heaven, but were to be brought down to hell, or temporal ruin. Ages ago this threatening was fulfilled; they have met a worse fate than Sodom and Gomorrah. O that all nations and individuals could see the misery and ruin sin is sure to bring upon them. Then would they repent in sackcloth and ashes. Reader! Turn, O turn to God; for why will ye die?

* Luke xiii. 1—5.

CHAPTER XXI.

FAITH.

The inspired writers lay great stress upon the *necessity* and *power* of faith. Their language is, 'He that cometh unto God must *believe* that he is' —'We that have *believed* do enter into rest'—'He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life.' Thus they make it the medium of coming to God, of obtaining rest and life. In speaking of its power, their language is equally explicit. They say, it has subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, and sustained the sinking spirit in the hour of death.

The correctness of this strong language will be evident by considering—

1. That faith is necessary to action. No man will attempt to do what he firmly believes is impossible. The mind is often in doubt, and it may stand hesitating whether it can succeed or not; but when it decides that it cannot, it would be directly contrary to our nature to make an attempt. Hence we must believe a thing is practicable, before we can make an effort to do it. So we must believe in an object, before we can be induced to seek it. Not only so, we must believe a benefit will be conferred, by seeking it. Thus we read, 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Thus without faith none will

seek God. The atheist does not seek him, because he does not believe in him; and the infidel does not seek him, because he does not believe him a rewarder of the obedient. This remark holds good in relation to the Messiah. Those who regard him as an impostor, will neither strive to imitate his example, nor obey his law; because they have not faith.

2. Faith is necessary to courage and perseverance. Things are so arranged in this world, that disappointment and opposition, labor and fatigue, attend almost every pursuit. At times everything seems to be arrayed in arms against what we believe to be right and just. Look at our nation, when borne down by oppression, and suffering under the most cruel wrongs. In this dark hour she had faith — faith to believe she could gain her independence, and hence she acted with firmness and courage; so that we may say with the apostle, Faith subdued the kingdom, out of weakness made us strong, caused us to wax valiant in fight, and enabled us to turn to flight the armies of the aliens. Suppose the faith of our country had not been firm; when she saw the difficulties rise before her like mountains, heard of the nakedness of her armies, their defeat in battle, and the increasing strength of the opposition, her courage and perseverance would have failed, and thus the enemy would have triumphed. Faith, therefore, is necessary to enable us to overcome difficulties, and to support us in the hour of darkness and danger.

3. Let us consider that faith is necessary to the efficacy of the great doctrines of the Bible. The truths of revelation are all matters of faith — the being of a God, his wisdom, love, power, justice and immutability; the mission, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ; — the resurrec-

tion and endless happiness of the world — all these are matters of faith; and, therefore, without faith, they could have no influence upon our hearts. The atheist is not melted into gratitude, softened and refined in his feelings by the love, mercy and kindness of God, because he does not believe in God. The infidel does not find his heart drawn out in pure affection to Jesus, for the blessings of his mission, because he considers him an impostor. Neither is he cheered and sustained by a hope in immortality as he goes down to the grave, because he considers death an endless sleep. Thus unbelief destroys the efficacy of truth; it makes the word of God of none effect. It is the office of faith then, to place an object before us — to make it act upon our hearts — to bring it home to our feelings.*

If faith be thus necessary, how important that a correct faith should prevail; for if unbelief destroys the influence of the Gospel, a false faith must have the same effect, just in proportion to the degree of its falsity. False views are injurious in many respects. Consider how much scepticism is produced by the prevalence of error. There are many, who see so much absurdity, irrationality and vulgar superstition in what passes for religion, that they consider it unworthy of their attention. This is the case with a large number of the educated and thinking part of community. Now let

* The infidel sneers at the importance which the Bible attaches to faith. 'You must believe it,' he says, 'before it can do you good.' But is there anything in this peculiar to the Bible? On what do infidel writings depend for their efficacy? Is it not on faith? On what do the laws of our land depend for their efficacy? Suppose we disbelieved the statute book of our State; could its laws and penalties restrain us from crime? What we believe becomes a reality to us. Take away faith, therefore, and no law, human or divine, could exert over us any influence.

the Gospel be presented in a light which reason can approve; let it be held up as a system of the most perfect consistency, exceeding in the perfection of its laws, the ampleness of its provisions, the grandeur of its doctrines, and the benevolence of its objects, all the systems ever invented by men, and the church of God will arise and shake herself from the dust. She will call to her aid the talent, learning and genius of our land, and exert the most commanding influence throughout the earth. But while religion is a 'motley monster of bigotry and superstition; a scarecrow of shreds and patches, dressed up of old by philosophers and popes, to amuse the speculative and affright the ignorant, it will continue to be the butt of scorn, against which every unfledged witling essays his wanton efforts, and by which he is fixed an infidel for life.'

Again.—A correct faith is necessary to render the gospel operative in producing love. Every man will walk in the name of his God. The heathen adore deities that are passionate and cruel; and hence they are passionate and cruel. The Jews believed in a partial God, and hence their bitterness towards the Gentiles. If, therefore, we wish to see all men live together like brethren, we must seek to spread that faith, which recognizes God as the Savior of the world.*

Again.—A correct faith is necessary to brighten our pathway to the grave. We are all hastening to the tomb. The questions, Is there a world beyond this; what will be our condition there,

* It is often said, our faith cannot reform, because it has no infinite terror to alarm. But if this objection be well founded, faith must work by fear, and by fear purify the heart; whereas the apostle says—'It works by love, and purifies the heart.' Hence the purifying tendency of faith rests, not on the doctrine of endless torture, but on the impartial love of God.

always press themselves upon our attention, whenever we think of dying. We anxiously inquire, whether we are to perish like the worm, or whether there is a spring-time, when we shall come forth in loveliness and glory? We ask too, whether we are to burn in a quenchless fire forever, or be the recipients of endless bliss? These questions are all answered in the gospel. Here shines a light which dispels all doubt, and banishes all fear, and opens to a world the portals of endless glory. From before this gospel, pain, sorrow, darkness and death recede; and as faith brightens, she beholds robes of righteousness, diadems of glory, crowns of salvation for a ransomed world; and as she listens, she hears notes of praise, hymns of thanksgiving, resounding, and reverberating through the boundless arches of heaven. Come, christian, can you not die triumphant, in the arms of such a faith? It spreads over you the broad wing of divine protection; it opens before you the way to endless glory, and it exchanges earth for heaven, pain for joy, death for life!

These views of faith will be confirmed by considering what the Scriptures say of its fruits. 1. It gives joy. 'Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Now there is no joy arising from the belief of endless suffering, or exposure to endless suffering. We should think it strange to hear a man say, Believing in endless wo, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Faith then, does not embrace the doctrine of endless punishment. 2. It produces love to all men. Paul said, the life he lived as a christian, was according to his faith. Now he believed in God as the Father of all. Hence he loved all. While a Jew, he believed in a partial God, and cherished a partial love. 3. It produces a holy life. The true believer keeps himself unspotted from the world.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOPE.

There is no passion more common to human beings than hope. We see it in the first buddings of the tender mind. The child is stimulated to duty by the hope of meeting its parent's approbation. The youth is encouraged in his studies and pursuits by the hope of holding an honored rank in community. Hope breathes courage into the heart of the soldier, and causes it to beat high with emotions of triumph as on the stormy flood, or death's devoted soil, he prepares for awful combat. It cheers the heart of the traveller, as he rides afar on atlantic waves, or seeks his way through foreign lands. All in all circumstances are looking forward, hoping for wider influence, larger possessions, or more extensive learning. None are without this feeling. The poet and the hero, the statesman and the divine all have it. Remove it from the world, and the fire of genius would go out, the lyre of the muse would be unstrung, and the march of improvement stop. Hope moves on the world of labor, art, science and virtue.

But cheering and encouraging as hope is, it often deceives, and raises expectations which are never realized. At one time, we see it flattering the lover of wealth, with the illusive dream of perfect bliss. At another, it cheats, by dreams equally deceptive, the devotees of fashion and pleasure, of fame and honor. Having the power to robe in enchanting

beauty whatever lies in the distance; to pour upon it the same mellow light that glitters at 'summer's eve' upon the far off hills, it magnifies imperfect blessings into the greatest good, changes human into divine forms, and converts the dreary waste into ever verdant fields.

But though often deceived by hope, we are never disposed to banish it from our bosoms. If one business proves unsuccessful, we try another. If fortune frowns to-day, we hope it will smile to-morrow. The family doomed to poverty's sequestered dell, and about whose unpitied home want and misery linger, are sustained by hope, and borne forward on its gentle pinions to brighter and better days. Hope breathes courage and patience into the nation oppressed by tyranny, and struggling for liberty. It tells how iron chains have been broken; how winds and waves have avenged the wrongs of the innocent; how the presiding Divinity guards and defends the cause of justice; how the little band of freedom's warriors have triumphed over the countless host, and caused the shattered spear to drop from their nerveless grasp.

Thus man is always the subject of hope, led on by this guiding star in all his wanderings, and cheered by it in every season of adversity. Banish it from the earth, and despair would settle in impenetrable darkness upon the world of mind. Truly, therefore, has the poet said—

> 'Auspicious hope! in thy sweet garden grow
> Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every wo.'

But man's hopes are not confined to this world. They reach beyond all its pleasures, honors and possessions to the eternal future. There is a natural principle within, which makes him turn his attention to another world. He finds nothing here to satisfy—nothing suited to his high and holy

nature. This earth is too narrow, its objects too transitory, its greatest blessings too mean, for his better nature. He, therefore, looks up to that world which is eternal as his final home, where he will have every want satisfied, and spend an eternity in the society of friends and the presence of his infinite Father. We know that our existence here is short; that generations come and go, just as waves succeed each other upon the boundless ocean; but we cannot endure the thought that our end is like those restless and momentary waves. Our desire for eternal existence masters all others, and we cling to this as the supreme good. If we turn our attention to the gospel, we find this cherishing, these instinctive hopes, and changing the trembling aspirations of the heart into confident expectation. It stretches out an infinite and everlasting arm for our support, and opens to our view a state of immortal riches and glory, of which all are the destined heirs. It shows that the great Jehovah has made the same provision for our eternal, that he has for our present welfare; that he has not secured our temporal, and neglected our immortal interests; that he has not implanted hopes in the soul for which he has made no provision.

This will be evident if we consider,

I. The character of christian hope. And

II. Its foundation.

I. Nothing is more distinctly taught, than that the inspired servants of God, hoped in the salvation of all men. This was the hope of Paul. He alludes to it in various places. Thus, in speaking of God's promise to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham, he says, 'Which hope we have;'* that is, we hope, that agreeably to this

* Heb. vi. 13—20.

unchanging promise, all nations will be blessed in Christ. For his hope, Paul was called in question by the Jews;* by which we learn that it must have been different from their partial hope. Like thousands at the present day, they hoped only for a few, whereas Paul hoped for all; he hoped that not only the Jews would be saved, but that the Gentiles would be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. This hope was exceedingly obnoxious to the Jews, who looked upon the Gentiles as outcasts from mercy. Hence their opposition to Paul.

That we are right as it regards the character of hope, is evident from its cause. This is the abundant mercy of God, and the resurrection of Christ.† Now God's mercy is universal; so that it can beget no partial hope. The reason that leads us to hope for ourselves, leads us to hope for the world. This agrees with the resurrection of Christ. He died for the offences of all, and rose for their justification; and hence his resurrection begets a hope for all. This reasoning is confirmed by its joyful effects. True hope gives a perfect fulness of joy; a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; and, therefore, it must embrace all, and give us the assurance of their final happiness. Hence we may well say—'God hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.'

II. What is the foundation of hope? We answer, it can be nothing connected with human merit or faithfulness; because it is said to be *sure and steadfast.* Man is frail, sinful and changeable. To-day he may be meek and penitent; to-morrow proud and sinful. To be sure and steadfast, therefore, hope must have its foundation in God. 'He is not man, that he should lie, nor the son of man

* Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6. † 1 Peter i. 3.

that he should repent.' Thus while man is unstable, God is eternally the same; and if hope be founded in him, we are like the vessel with its anchor within the pier head, riding out the storm in safety, though the heavens be wrapt in darkness, and wave rises upon wave like mountain upon mountain; but if it be founded on human merit, we are like the captain at sea, who throws his anchor into the hold of his vessel, and calls upon his crew to dismiss their fears, when they are the mere sport of winds and waves. And yet, when christians talk of getting a hope, they mean they get that virtue and faith which will carry them to heaven! Thus they hope in themselves! How different from the Apostle. His anchor was cast within the vail, like the ship that throws her anchor within the pier head.

To see the correctness of the foregoing views, we have only to consider what the Apostle says respecting God's promise. 'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.'* Here the Apostle speaks of the immutability of God's counsel. This refers to the plan which he formed before the birth of time. That plan was dictated by infinite goodness, and formed by infinite wisdom. Hence, it must embrace the interests of all men, and being immutable, it must result in their eternal salvation. But God condescended to do more than merely to reveal this plan; he promised with an oath to carry it into complete execution. In making the oath, he swore by

* Heb. vi. 17. 18.

nothing temporal; but he swore by himself, and thus pledged all his attributes for the fulfilment of his promise. Here then is the foundation of hope. God's plan to save all; his promise to save all; and his oath which pledges all his attributes. The case could not be stronger than it is made by the Apostle. Every figure used shows the infinity, eternity and immutability of the foundation. The ocean has been referred to as a striking figure of the eternity and infinity of God. Who, it has been asked, can stand upon its solitary shore, hear its surges beat, uttering such grand and inimitable symphonies as are fit for the audience of cliffs and skies; and have their minds fly back to the time, when, though we were not, and our fathers were not, these surges were yet beating, incessantly beating, making the same wild music, and heard alone by the overhanging cliffs, and the overarching skies, without regarding it as a striking personification of eternity? But God swore not by the ocean; he swore by that which will abide when the ocean shall cease to be; when its cliffs shall crumble to dust, and the skies be folded up like a vesture; he swore by himself. Thus the foundation of hope is broad as the universe and fixed as the eternal throne; it is built entirely on that plan of free and unlimited grace, by which a world is to be saved with an endless salvation. To obtain a hope, therefore, is to be made acquainted with this plan, and learn the evidences of universal happiness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

Having proved that love to God and love to our fellow beings, is the great requisition of the divine law; that nothing but love can fulfil it, and that to bring all men into the enjoyment of love, is the end of all the divine dealings and purposes,* we shall not detain the reader long in speaking of christian love. True, a volume would not exhaust what we should be glad to say on this great subject; but our limits require the utmost brevity. That God is a being worthy the supreme love of all his creatures, has been fully proved in the foregoing pages. He is our infinite Father and Friend; and in all things he has sought the highest happiness of his children. All mankind are brethren; and being mutually dependent, having the same interests, and following the same pursuits, it is of the utmost importance that they should love each other. Hence the stress laid upon christian love; it is the end of the law; and did it universally prevail, all men would be obedient to God. To be satisfied of this, let us consider,

1. That love assimilates us to God and each other. 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' 'Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' All will acknowledge this power of love to unite

* See chap. vi. p. 98.

us to God and each other. Visit the family where it reigns in all hearts, and you will see all bound together; their feelings and wishes are all in harmony. Not a note of discord is heard. 'The happiness of one, is the happiness of all.' What a perfect contrast between such a family, and one where hatred reigns. There all is discord, bitterness and strife. Let a person with christian love in his soul, go among people of another faith, color, language, or country, and he will find in all who possess this principle, a fellow feeling, a reciprocity of spirit; they will come together as brethren. Hence, if love reigned in all hearts, all would live together in peace; duelling and war would come to an end; and evil in every form be annihilated.

2. Love makes duty a pleasure. The poet has truly said—

> 'We run in God's commands,
> When love directs the way,
> With willing hearts and active hands,
> Our Maker's will obey.
>
> Love softens all our toil,
> And makes our bondage blest;
> The gloomy desert wears a smile,
> When love inspires the breast.'

There is no truth more evident than this. We see it in the exertions made by parents for their children. See them watching night after night; toiling early and late, and enduring every earthly inconvenience for their good, without uttering a word of complaint. Now this is all the fruit of love. It is the same in religion. If the love of God reigns in the soul, it is no task to obey his commands. Duty is our meat and drink. We delight in obedience; it is a high and holy joy.

3. Love makes us do as we would be done by. Men are prone to wrong each other; to be unjust

in their dealings; to take advantage of the ignorance and inexperience of those with whom they trade. They are disposed also to treat those less favored by fortune with cold neglect; to look down upon them with pride and disdain. The only way to correct this evil, is by love. Implant love in the soul of man, and he will treat all as brethren; he will seek to do good as he has opportunity. Now the great object of the Gospel is to overcome this selfishness and littleness of the human heart, and make men act upon the noble principles of love. Therefore, it requires us to do by others, as we would they should do by us; and it makes a compliance with this law, the evidence of discipleship. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Men have been unwilling to submit to this test; and hence in every age they have sought to modify christianity, so that they could be accounted christians without love. Accordingly we have been told, that it is not love, but subscribing to a creed, that makes the christian. Hence the wars and persecutions of the church, the horrors of the inquisition, and the bitterness, unkindness and denunciation, prevailing among the different christian sects. Indeed, such has been the ascendency gained by the tests which the church has established, that at times it has been thought wrong to love unbelievers, and men have supposed they were doing God service in persecuting heretics. We cannot cling, therefore, with too much tenacity to the Savior's rule of discipleship. Nothing else can stop the work of religious persecution, or break down the walls of partition that divide the christian world. Nothing else can make honesty, fairness and kindness the characteristics of christians. While men believe they can be christians by simply subscribing to a particular creed, or

going through with the forms of godliness, christians will be cruel and unkind, proud and haughty, treacherous and unprincipled, vindictive and bitter, the same as those who make no pretension to the christian name. Christianity can do nothing towards making people the true disciples of Jesus, without the agency of love.

4. Love is the sum of all happiness. To be satisfied of this, look at those under its influence. They sing the praises of God; they delight in doing good; they have no wish to engage in war or strife. But those filled with hatred are the reverse. They curse and swear; they rage and fight; they seek to injure and destroy. Now no person will ever seek to make others miserable except he is miserable himself. Therefore, love is happiness, and hatred misery. Fill the heart with love, and you fill it with bliss; fill it with hatred, and you fill it with misery.

Here, then, we see the importance of christian love. Were it universal, it would not only unite all hearts to God, but unite the whole human race together as one family; overcome all evil, and fill the world with obedience and joy. It is the essence of the Gospel; and without it, whatever may be our other attainments, we are as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. God is love; love to all; and how can we be his followers without loving all? 'Jesus Christ was an emanation of love in our world. He was love living, breathing, speaking, acting, amongst men. His birth was the nativity of love, his sermons the words of love, his miracles the wonders of love, his tears the melting of love, his crucifixion the agonies of love, his resurrection the triumph of love. Hence it was natural that love should be the cardinal virtue in the character of his followers, and that it should be the law which regulates their conduct towards each other.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

PRAYER.

In the time of our Savior public prayer was always a part of the synagogue worship. Whenever religious assemblies came together, prayer made a part of their exercises. The christians pursued the same course. When they met, they prayed, sang hymns, and exhorted each other. This custom accounts for the fact, that we have no express commands for public prayer.* There was no call for such a command. Public prayer was neglected in no place of worship. The error was in making the prayers too long, and praying to be seen of men. Hence we find cautions against these evils. We find also frequent commands for secret prayer; a duty which was greatly neglected. The early christians were a praying people, and though con-

* It has been argued from the silence of the New Testament respecting public prayer, that it is unauthorized; and from Christ's reproof of the Pharisees, that it is wrong. This conclusion, as we have seen, is against the custom of the early christians. Besides—'Our nature is social. Our religion is social. We associate for almost every other purpose. We come together to enjoy. We come together to animate our patriotism and benevolence. Shall we not come together to pray? We assemble to recognize our obligations as brethren of one family. Shall we not assemble to acknowledge our duties, to express our wants as dependants upon one common Benefactor, as children of one common Father, as aspirants after one and the same glory? Shall we come together with one heart and not avail ourselves of one voice to signify our common desires and to strengthen our common wants? Much I fear that the devotional exercises of many a mind would be 'few and far between,' were it not for the public services of prayer.'

demned by the ostentatious Pharisees, as being deficient in this duty, they prayed both in public and private. But, though prayer is explicitly enjoined in the Bible; though Jesus and the Apostles prayed, the question is often asked, 'What is the use of prayer?' 'To what purpose,' it has been asked, 'is homage addressed to a Being whose purpose is unalterably fixed; to whom our righteousness extendeth not; whom by no arguments we can persuade, and by no supplications we can mollify? The objection would have weight if our religious addresses were designed to work any alteration on God, either by giving him information of what he did not know, or by exciting affections which he did not possess, or by inducing him to change measures which he had previously formed. But they are only crude and imperfect notions of religion which can suggest such ideas. The change which our devotions are intended to make is upon ourselves, not upon the Almighty. Their chief efficacy is derived from the good dispositions which they raise and cherish in the human soul. By pouring out pious sentiments and desires before God, by adoring his perfection and confessing our own unworthiness, by expressing our dependence on his aid, our gratitude for his past favors, our submission to his present will, our trust in his future mercy, we cultivate such affections as suit our place and station in the universe, and are thereby prepared for becoming objects of the divine grace. Accordingly frequent assurances are given us in the Scripture, that the prayers of sincere worshippers, preferred through the great Mediator, shall be productive of the happiest effects. When they ask, they shall receive; when they seek, they shall find; when they knock, it shall be opened to them. Prayer is appointed to be the channel for conveying the

divine grace to mankind, because the wisdom of Heaven saw it to be one of the most powerful means of improving the human heart.

'When religious homage is considered in this light, as a great instrument of spiritual and moral improvement, all the objections which scepticism can form from the divine immutability, conclude with no more force against prayer, than against every other mean of improvement which reason has suggested to man. If prayer be superfluous because God is unchangable, we might upon similar grounds conclude, that it is needless to labor the earth, to nourish our bodies, or to cultivate our minds, because the fertility of the ground, the continuance of our life, and the degree of our understanding, depend upon an immutable Sovereign, and were from all eternity foreseen by him. Such absurd conclusions reason has ever repudiated. To every plain and sound understanding it has clearly dictated, that to explore the unknown purposes of heaven belongs not to us; but that He who decrees the end, certainly requires the means; and that, in the diligent employment of all the means which can advance either our temporal or spiritual felicity, the chief exertions of human wisdom and human duty consist.'*

According to the foregoing views prayer has an inseparable connection with our growth in grace and divine knowledge. It is a solemn service incumbent on all men. Let the heads of families remember, that God has appointed prayer as one of the mediums through which he will communicate his blessings. If, therefore, they desire his favor upon their families, they should erect a family altar, and lift up their petitions to God. If they do not feel qualified to perform this service

* Blair's Sermons, vol. 2. p. 93—96.

extemporaneously, let them use a manual.* Let all men pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. Are any tempted, let them pray. Are any in affliction, let them pray.

To be beneficial, prayer must be addressed to God as the Father of all. 'After this manner pray ye, *Our* Father who art in heaven.' Now who can bow in humble sincerity before the universal Father, and ask his benediction, without having his heart expanded, and filled with love? If the Pagan becomes like the god before which he bows, why will not the christian? In every petition then, let us say, not *my* Father, but *our* Father, and thereby we shall be reminded, that all are our brethren and have a claim upon our love and aid. Again.—We are required first of all to pray for all men. But who can do this, and yet seek to injure some? Can we pray God to bless the man we would wrong, and cheat, and slander? Thus, he that prays for all, will seek the good of all. Again.—We are required to pray for the forgiveness of our sins. 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' 'Forgive us our debts.' Now who can sincerely put up such a petition, without being reminded of his sins, and resolving to be more watchful and faithful than he has ever been? Again.—We are to acknowledge our dependence upon God. 'Give us this day our daily bread.' How apt are we to forget God; and that from him comes every good and perfect gift. Hence the coldness of our hearts, and the greatness of our ingratitude. But prayer would keep us mindful of our infinite Benefactor, the source of all our mercies.

Such then, is the way in which this duty must be performed, if we would have our souls purified, and our affections elevated. 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find.'

* We would recommend the Manual by Rev. M. Rayner.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SABBATH.

According to Moses the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation of the world. 'And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.'* Some, it is true, suppose that this language has no reference to the appointment of a Sabbath to be observed by man, but simply teaches, what God did on that day. Others suppose that Moses spoke proleptically, and referred to what would be done. The Sabbath, it has been said, could not have been appointed on the seventh day of the creation, because it is not mentioned in the patriarchal age. But this is no proof, for it is not mentioned from the time of Moses to the end of David's reign, a period of nearly four hundred years. Besides, the manner in which it is referred to by Moses,† while the Jewish people were journeying in the wilderness, shows, that it was not a new institution; but one perfectly well known, and generally observed.

After the resurrection of Christ, the Sabbath was 'altered from the seventh to the first day of the week. The arguments for the change are these: 1. As the seventh day was observed by the Jewish church in memory of the rest of God after the works of the creation, and their deliverance from Pharaoh's tyranny, so the first day of the week has always been observed by the christian church in memory of Christ's resurrection.—2. Christ made repeated visits to his disciples on

* Gen. ii. 3. † Exod. xvi. 23.

that day.—3. It is called the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10. 4. On this day the Apostles were assembled, when the Holy Ghost came down so visibly upon them, to qualify them for the conversion of the world.—5. On this day we find St. Paul preaching at Troas, when the disciples came to break bread.—6. The directions the Apostles give to the christians plainly allude to their religious assemblies on the first day.—7. Pliny bears witness of the first day of the week being kept as a festival, in honor of the resurrection of Christ: and the primitive christians kept it in the most solemn manner.'*

Regarding it as immaterial what day we keep, whether the seventh or the first, I will not detain the reader longer on this question, but will proceed to consider the reasons why one day in seven should be observed.

I. It is necessary as a day of rest. Hard, unceasing toil would, in a short period, wear out the best constitution. All history and experience teach this. Those who work on from month to month without interruption, soon find their energies failing. Hence, it has been justly concluded, that man will perform more labor in a year by resting one day in seven, than by devoting his whole time to toil. If the remark be just when applied to the labor of a year, how much more just is it, when applied to the labor of a whole life? Those therefore, adopt a wrong policy, who devote the Sabbath to labor. They are no richer for this; for would they give their 'flagging forces' time to recover their spring; and their 'ebbing spirits' a chance to receive a 'new supply of sustenance and force,' they would return to their work with more vigor, and pursue it with greater energy. But this is not all. Men are often cruel and unfeeling, and

* Buck's Theolog. Dictionary.

drive the laborer far beyond his strength. How gracious then is the appointment which secures him a weekly day of rest, a day that he can call his own, and on which he can feel himself free. How welcome to the laborer is the close of the week! With what pleasing emotions does he hail the Sabbath! From this day life derives half its charms. Hence God says, 'Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath'* of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.'

II. The Sabbath was appointed as a season for religious worship. Were no day set apart, when the people should assemble for religious instruction, christianity could do but little for the world. To be satisfied of this, look at those places where the Sabbath is profaned; where the people do not assemble for the worship of God, and you will find them not only ignorant of the Gospel, but living in the open violation of its holiest laws; you will find them slaves to almost every species of vice. This is generally the character of those who despise the Sabbath. I do not say that every man who keeps the Sabbath holy, is a good man, nor that every one who profanes it is an enemy of every divine law; but I say, generally, those who devote the Sabbath to religious worship are good men, while those who profane it are bad men. To see the amount of good done by a proper observance of the Sabbath, we must consider —

1. That it is a means of obtaining the most important of all knowledge. There is no knowledge to be compared with a knowledge of God and his

* The word Sabbath signifies rest.

truth. The Sabbath being set apart for religious instruction, furnishes the best means for obtaining this knowledge. Preaching, I know, is in too many cases, a means of shrouding the mind in mystery, and fastening upon it the chains of ignorance, error and superstition; but when it answers its design, it spreads before us the whole nature of God and his government; lifts up the veil that hides eternity from our view; shows the wisdom, goodness and excellency of the divine law; all the advantages of religion, and all the evils of irreligion. Thus it makes the poor and the ignorant wiser than all the philosophers and moralists of the whole heathen world.

2. Man has numerous errors to correct. All have gone astray, and preaching is the means by which they are to be reclaimed. Hence they need to have their vices exposed; their hearts dissected and laid open; their sins numbered and held up for their serious consideration. Such preaching, I know, is not pleasing to all. Some are not satisfied except a minister is prying into doctrine; unravelling error; demolishing man-made systems, and diving into the depths of metaphysics. Such are not edified in hearing sin exposed and virtue enforced. 'It is no use,' they say, 'to hear such things; they understand all of that.' Sometimes men of this character become so far advanced that it is useless to attend church; they have learned out; the minister can teach them no more; and so they spend their Sabbaths in riding, visiting, or laboring. Now aside from such learned ignorance, the case supposes that man is only an intellectual being; that he has no moral and religious nature to cultivate; no sins to forsake; no false attachments to correct, no duties to learn — an error of ruinous tendency.

3. Divine worship enables us to place a just

estimate on things temporal. When immersed in the business of the world, or following its 'painted follies' and 'giddy pleasures,' we over-estimate their worth. But when engaged in Divine worship, the 'world diminishes to its true size, and all its allurements, and all its pleasures, and all its glories, and all its hopes, assume their proper forms and appear in their just proportions. Then we see how small those things are which we thought great, and how insignificant when compared with those scenes and enjoyments which imagination cannot reach, which time cannot furnish, which infinity alone can measure, and eternity alone supply.' Thus we learn that things temporal are by no means worthy the enduring and ardent attachment which we have wasted upon them; that things spiritual and eternal demand our love and hope; 'and that as we are destined to live in glory, when the sun shall no longer shine in his splendor, the moon walk in her brightness, the hills abide in their majesty, and the streams flow in their fulness,' we should seek those things which are above, and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. In no other way can we be inspired with hope, and fitted for our 'great and last change, when a long and dreamless slumber falleth upon the soul.'

4. We shall see the necessity of the Sabbath for worship, when we consider, that religion does not come on the wind, drop down from the skies, or grow up like Jonah's gourd in a night. It is a plant, which has a gradual growth—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full grown corn in the ear. It is a plant which requires culture; it must be nourished with care; it must be watched and guarded, or poisonous weeds will check its growth; it must be watered, too, with the dews of divine grace. Every time then that the Sabbath is pro-

faned, this plant is chilled and retarded in its growth. Hence of all people Universalists ought to be the most punctual in their attendance upon Divine worship. Did they suppose, that they could get religion in a brief season of excitement, or by a groan, a sigh, or a jerk, the case would be entirely different. But religion is not an article that can be picked up in a moment, or put on as a man puts on his coat; it is the general state of the feelings and affections; it is a life of purity, love and meekness; and to have it, we must master our passions, curb our headstrong desires, and live in the discharge of all our social, moral and religious duties.

Such are the reasons why the Sabbath was instituted: it was for the rest of man, and his religious improvement. We can, therefore, say with the Savior, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' According to these views, all unnecessary labor on the Sabbath is sinful. Only work of necessity can be done. All vain amusements too, are sinful. Some think that riding, sailing, visiting, and travelling, are perfectly proper on this day. I have thought that some imagined there was a virtue in starting a journey on the Sabbath; for they generally make it a point to start on that day. All this is wrong, and profaning it. We would not, it is true, make the day unsocial and gloomy; but while we would avoid the austerity and sadness of former times, we would not run into the opposite extremes. *Every thing should be avoided on the Sabbath, which is not necessary, that will be in any manner calculated to interrupt the worship of God, or counteract its influence.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BEFORE his crucifixion, Jesus called his disciples together, and ate with them the Jewish passover, a feast which had been observed without interruption for fourteen hundred years. At the conclusion of this feast, he established an ordinance which was to succeed the passover, and be perpetuated to the end of time. This ordinance is called the Lord's Supper. It has been observed in every age of the church. At different times, it has been greatly corrupted, and grossly perverted from its original design. It has also, been a subject of much dispute. There have been long controversies respecting the kind of bread to be used, and the time of day when it should be observed. But there is no occasion for controversy here; for its efficacy does not depend upon the kind of bread used, or the hour in which it is observed. Not having room to trace its history, or point out its abuses, I shall confine my remarks to the importance of the institution, and the qualifications of a communicant.

I. Its importance. There are many ways in which we can learn this.

1. We can learn it from the emblems used. They were bread and water. Taking the bread, Jesus says, 'This is my body,' or emblematical of my body, and will call to mind my sufferings and death. Now what in the christian scheme is more important than the death of Christ? It shows God's infinite and unchanging love for the

world, and opens the fountains of that grace by which all sinners are redeemed. Another emblem used was wine. 'He took the cup, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.' In ancient times, contracts were ratified by blood. With reference to this custom, Jesus says, 'This is my blood of the new testament;' that is, this represents my blood by which the new covenant is sealed. The new covenant! This embraces all the truths proclaimed by the Savior, and all the promises of the gospel.* Thus the Lord's Supper places, by appropriate emblems, before the christian, all that was signified by the sufferings and death of Christ. Hence if it be important to have those truths which are the sum and essence of christianity kept in the mind, it is important to eat the Lord's Supper.

2. We can learn the importance of the Lord's Supper, by considering the necessity of forms in religion. It has been well said, that 'rites, or formal observances, of some kind, are, in the nature of things, inseparable from social religion. What are all our regulations and usages, our selection of a preacher, the appointment of our meetings on Sundays, our simultaneous gatherings, the postures we assume, the order of exercises, &c.—what are they but forms? There is an absurdity into which we may here fall through inadvertence. With the laudable aim of preserving simplicity in religion, some have thought it necessary to decry observances in general; but the utmost they can do, in this respect, is to discard the old, and adopt the new. Witness the Quakers. The very channels of social intercourse are artificial forms and signs more or less defined. Society as inevitably grows up with them as men with their fleshly bodies.

* Heb. viii.

And when we institute societies for the diffusion or promotion of religion, forms will in spite of us, adhere to them. The only practicable questions are, what are the proper ones? and to what intent ought we to observe them? Now in the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, there is so natural a significance, and so great a simplicity, that it is difficult for us to conceive of objections to it except on the absurd ground of former abuse, or with the equally absurd aim of discarding everything of the kind. It falls naturally into the train of usages in all climes and states of society; and it has so many affecting associations, is so connected with the most touching incidents in our Savior's life, that it can hardly fail of setting him before our minds with peculiar efficiency.'*

3. The advantages arising from a public profession of religion, show the importance of the Lord's Supper. Mankind are so constituted, as to require something to bind them to a faithful discharge of their obligations. We see this in every department of human society. All are bound to speak the truth; yet when men are called into courts of justice, they are put under oath. All are bound to be good citizens, to fill with honor every station they consent to occupy, but when men are appointed to high offices of trust, they are required formally and solemnly to promise that they will be faithful. It is so in religion. All are bound to love God, obey his law, and aid in the spread of truth and holiness; but God, knowing man's proneness to forget his duty, has appointed various methods to make him feel his obligations. The Lord's Supper is one of these methods; and hence the charge—'This do in remembrance of me'—take upon yourselves a public profession of religion.

* Universalist Expos. vol. 1339.

But there is another advantage. The man who has made a public profession of his faith will naturally strive to do honor to that profession. He will consider what is expected of him, not only by his brethren, but by the world; and will, therefore, seek to avoid every appearance of evil. Not only so—He has identified himself with religion—not simply with its abstract theory, but with its most sacred and solemn duties. Now when a man has once committed himself in regard to any question, he is not likely, without good reasons, to abandon his ground. So far from this, he will defend himself and his cause, to the full extent of his power and means. Well—in setting down to the Lord's table, we identify ourselves with his cause; we own it as ours, and feel it a duty to act in its defence. Besides—our public profession will have a powerful influence on others. One exemplary christian will infuse his spirit into all who come within the sphere of his influence. Man is the creature of imitation; he will readily conform to the manners and customs of those around him; and when he sees others engaged in a good work, he will be imperceptibly led to imitate their example. Hence the command, 'Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father in heaven.' It was not enough to believe in Christ—to be persuaded of the excellency and worth of his religion; they must come out and confess this to the world, and thus aid in silencing the opposition, encouraging the weak, and cheering the faithful. And it is not enough now to believe christianity; we must give the influence of our example in its favor, or we have done nothing.

4. We learn the importance of the Lord's Supper, by the command—*This do in remembrance of me.* What is it to remember Jesus? What is it to

remember the fathers of our country, who poured out their life's blood on the altar of freedom and human good? Is it not to call to mind what they were, and did, and suffered in their own persons; and all the blessings and advantages which have resulted from their toils and sacrifices? Well—to remember Jesus, is to call to mind his spotless life; his untiring devotion to the interests of humanity; the innumerable sacrifices he made for the establishment of his cause; his examples of humility; his labors as a Priest, Prophet and King; as Mediator, Redeemer and Savior. How important then to remember Jesus. We may forget our country, the home and associates of our youth, and still remain true christians. But if we forget the Savior, we forget all; we have no model after which to form our character; no bright and shining example for our imitation; no great and glowing sentiments of love and compassion to soften and refine our hearts; no pure and perfect laws to guide our footsteps; no sublime and holy hopes, on which to lean in the hour of death.

What then is more important, than an ordinance which shall keep Jesus constantly fresh in the mind? When I consider its full import and its great influence, I am amazed that christians have been so indifferent about its observance. It is alike suited to the cultivated and uncultivated; the ruler and subject; the rich and poor. None can say, it is too simple and trivial for their observance; for if they look at what is symbolically represented, they will behold truths, and events, the most sublime and important, ever viewed by the loftiest intellect of earth. Washington, the illustrious father of this country, was not ashamed to sit down at the table of the Master which he served; for it was his custom to avail himself of every opportunity which presented to celebrate the

death and suffering of Jesus. There are those in society, who think the institution is well enough for the illiterate, poor and aged, but so far beneath their notice, that they cannot come down to it! Come down! Jesus is Lord of lords; and though eating with him may not be a passport to the high seats of human honor, it can elevate to a station with which the world has nothing to compare. Talk not, therefore, ye fancied great men, of coming down; cast your eye upward, and if possible lift your mind to the elevation of the Lord's table.

II. What should be the qualification of a communicant? We answer—Faith in Christ, as the Messiah of God, and the Savior of the world. Throughout the whole New Testament this is the requisite. I know some think we must believe in the trinity, total depravity, and endless wo. But no such requisition is made in the Bible. The Confession of Faith among the Apostles was—'We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'* This faith, however, must purify the heart. A dead faith has no value. It must also produce corresponding good works. Three things then, are requisite in the christian character. 1. Faith in Christ. 2. Penitence and love. 3. A good life. The man that has these is a christian, and should come to the Lord's table. He need not wait till he is perfect. If he endeavors to do his duty; to imitate his Savior, he should come. The virtues of a christian are justice, kindness, temperance, love and truth. The man, therefore, that seeks through the aid of faith, to be exemplary in his conduct, and just in his dealings, should eat with his Lord.

* Acts viii. 37; xvi. 31.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TENDENCY OF UNIVERSALISM.

For any system of religion to be successful in restraining its believers from sin, and cherishing the growth of virtue, it must be statedly and faithfully preached, and aided by the appointed means of divine grace. No abstract theory can have much influence without the aid of the Sabbath; public worship, and all the institutions of the Gospel. Attaching, therefore, as Universalism does, the same importance to these means of grace, that is attached to them by any other system, it in this respect stands on a level with them. The question, therefore, which claims our attention, is, Does Universalism contain those doctrines which have power to save and sanctify? Can it, if faithfully preached, and aided by all the institutions of religion, reform the sinner, and make him a devoted christian? To answer this question, let us turn to the Gospel, and consider —

I. In what its power did not consist. And

II. In what it did consist.

1. It did not consist in *propitiatory worship.* There are two kinds of worship in the world. One is designed to avert the anger and obtain the favor of the being adored; the other to enlighten the understanding, elevate the affections and rectify the life of the worshiper. All heathen worship is propitiatory. Whenever idolaters bow before their gods, it is to change their wrath into mercy. They pay little or no adoration to their friendly

deities, giving as a reason that they will not injure them; and the evil ones, they say, may be prevented from doing so by attention and devotion. Now the worship of a large part of christendom is propitiatory, performed to gain the favor of an incensed God. Once, it is said, let the idea universally prevail, that God is the friend of all, and worship would cease throughout the whole world. But here the question arises, why heathenism was so powerless, so utterly unable to save, if the virtue of the Gospel consist in propitiatory worship? Why was it so infinitely surpassed by the religion of Jesus? According to the common opinion, they bear an exact resemblance in their nature; and yet one ruins while the other saves! Say not that the inefficiency of heathenism was owing to its idols; for they were far more terrible than is the God of the christian; and the heathen were much more solicitous to avert the anger of their divinities, than is the christian to avert the anger of his divinity. The great defect, then, was in the nature of the worship; — their prayers, and sacrifices, and penances were all in vain, and had no power to render them holy, chaste and upright, because directed to a wrong purpose, — designed to change the gods instead of them; they were as useless as the labors of him who should seek a rich harvest by sacrificing to the sun.

2. The power of the Gospel did not consist in *mystery*. Many christians fear nothing so much as reason in matters of religion. They imagine if the Gospel is made plain, and suited to the comprehension, it will lose its influence, and man will cease to respect and obey it. Hence we have the mystery of the trinity, of transubstantiation, of vicarious atonement, of miraculous conversion, of election and reprobation and of endless misery. Everything in religion is veiled in mystery, and

doctrines are held sacred just in proportion to the inability of the people to explain them. But if the power of the Gospel consists in this, why was heathenism so ineffectual — yea, so pernicious in its tendency? 'Every maxim of morality, every tenet of theology, every dogma of philosophy was wrapt up in a veil of allegory and mysticism.' And yet, with all the darkness in which it was shrouded, instead of regenerating and sanctifying the soul, it corrupted and degraded it. Mystery, therefore, did not give the Gospel its success.

3. Its power did not consist in endless punishment. Perhaps no class of people on earth have dealt more in the terrors of hell, than the heathen. They have relied exclusively on these to enforce all the duties of their religion. Not only have spiritual teachers dealt out the thunders of infinite wrath, but rulers and administrators of the law. The following description, by a christian poet, is perfectly applicable to the heathen hell.

——————— 'And far as sight could pierce,
Or down descend in caves of hopeless depth,
Through all that dungeon of unfading fire,
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed;
For ever wasting, yet enduring still;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.
Some wandered lonely in the desert flames,
And some in fell encounter fiercely met,
With curses loud, and blasphemies, that made
The cheek of Darkness pale; and as they fought,
And cursed, and gnashed their teeth, and wished to die,
Their hollow eyes did utter streams of wo.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept,
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.'

Nothing could be more terrific than the heathen representation of hell. Its machinery, the nature of its torture, the intensity of its punishments were

full of horror. And as in imagination it was constantly open, and its fires perpetually burning, it must have restrained the sinner, if endless punishment has power to restrain. Consequently the success of the Gospel was not owing to the eternity of suffering.

4. The power of the Gospel did not consist in human learning. The Greeks were wise in the wisdom of this world. They were renowned for their philosophy; the purity of their language, and the graces of their elocution. They had been favored with eminent instructors, and 'their religion had been lighted up with the rare lustre of Zoroaster, Pythagoras and Socrates.' But still it was powerless. Not all the beauty of language, nor the fascinations of oratory, nor the discoveries of philosophy, could enable it to regenerate the heart. Let me not be misunderstood. I am not opposed to human learning; nor do I believe that truth loses any of its power from being connected with it. On the contrary, I know that learning enables us to present truth in its best and most forcible light; to bring out in the clearest and fullest manner all its excellences and glories. I would have men thoroughly educated. I rejoice in every seminary that is established, and college that is endowed. And I should rejoice yet more to see schools rising up among us, to prepare young men for the ministry, and which should send forth those able to do justice to our most excellent and holy religion. But while I hold learning thus important, I do not believe it is the power of God unto salvation. The thirsty man needs something more than a golden pitcher, and the hungry man something more than a table loaded with massive plate. Whenever I listen to preaching that is graceful and literary; but destitute of the great doctrines of redemption; I feel like a man who

has a splendid house, and splendid furniture, but is dying for food. I think of a being made from the dry bones in the vision of Ezekiel; and I almost instinctively exclaim, let the spirit of truth breathe upon it, that it may have life. It is not surprising, therefore, that that preaching is powerless and unsatisfactory, which gives you no definite views of God, or his government, or the destiny of his creation; and which reminds you of a man upon the boundless ocean, without chart or compass, unable to find his desired port, daily changing his course, but never coming nearer home. Learning, then, is not to be substituted for Gospel; nor to be used as the great means of working out man's salvation; but it is to be employed in presenting the Gospel in its most favorable and powerful light. Thus we see in what the power of the Gospel did not consist. We will, therefore, proceed to show,

II. In what it did consist.

1. It consisted in the love of God. To this love the inspired writers always appeal, in their efforts to advance the cause of virtue. Their language is, 'O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness.' It is the goodness of God that leadeth men to repentance. 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we *ought* also to love one another.' To attempt this great work by any other means, is like shutting out the sun from our land, and substituting the light and warmth of artificial fires. And yet men have generally gone upon this principle, in their efforts to reform the wicked. They have veiled Deity in robes of vengeance, and sought to save the soul by the fires of wrath. But this is against the whole scheme of redemption; for the character, which God has made to stand most visibly out in this mighty plan, is love — free, unbought, unmerited, eternal love. He saw this to

be the only method by which he could gain the human heart. Hence he calls himself our Father; speaks of his great love wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins; and assures us, that the brightest examples of human love are faint emblems of his goodness and grace.

Now why should Deity adopt this method to reform the most abandoned, if there be not an omnipotent influence in love — an influence which restores when all other means have failed—which is adapted to all characters and conditions?

The experience of Howard, the great philanthropist, shows that we are right. His labors were among the outcasts of society; among, not only the ignorant, but those hardened by repeated crimes and stained by every moral pollution. After travelling through Europe, and descending into every prison house, and becoming familiar with men in all the stages of depravity, he gives it as the fruit of his experience, that the most hardened criminals are not unreclaimable. Treat them, he says, with tenderness, show them that you have humanity, and without relaxing a single iota from the steadiness of a calm and resolute discipline, you will make them feel the workings of those powers, which give man his dignity and moral worth; which are the springs of his best and noblest actions. Our own experience proves this doctrine. When do our bosoms beat with such lively emotions as when the subjects of undeserved kindness; or the recipients of that pity which weeps over the unfortunate and afflicted; and that charity which like a guardian angel visits the home of poverty and wretchedness; watches at the couch of sickness, and which remains by the humble sufferer to soothe and comfort, till his eyes are closed in death? Thus love makes the gospel the power of God unto salvation; for love only can awaken love.

2. The power of the gospel consists in the doctrine of a common brotherhood. One of the greatest and most common errors of the world, is that of teaching a natural distinction among men, dividing the race into separate parties, representing those of another nation as having no claim upon our love, and being lawful subjects for oppression. We find this error running through all religions but the religion of Christ. See the narrow feelings of the Jew, and his contempt of all who reject Judaism. It is the same with the Mahomedan and the Pagan. The reason is—their religions do not recognize the fact, that all men are brethren; do not enforce the duty of loving all men, without regard to country or faith; of loving all because the children of a common parent. The love which they awaken is strong and ardent; one willing to fight; to encounter peril; to endure hardships; to sacrifice even life itself, for the good of a brother. But it is only a *party* love—a love for man because he is my countryman, a believer in my creed.

Now this narrow love is the same which existed in the days of Jesus; and had he been a Jew or a Pagan, it would have embraced him with the warmest cordiality; and instead of crowning him with thorns, nailing him to the cross, mocking and deriding him, it would have deified him; and armed itself with swords and weapons of death against all who refused to bow in adoration before him. The same love is in existence now. You can see throughout all christendom its enclosures; its high walls of partition; its badges of distinction. A partial religion can awaken no other love; it has not power to create an affection for those not included in its plans of grace. Hence the animosity and bitterness and want of fellowship among christians; and hence they have hated those for

whom Jesus died! Now the gospel is as far from this as the east is from the west. This knows nothing of names, sects or nations; it breaks over the narrow enclosures of country and party, and 'stretches across the whole wide plain of humanity.' It wakes up a love for man as man; a love which stops not to ask whether the bleeding sufferer is sound in opinion; which waits not before giving shelter to the weary traveller, to learn his country or kindred. It is enough for it to know that a *man* is bleeding and suffering; that a human being desires shelter from the pitiless storm. There is nothing in the gospel more powerful; and as I see it going forward in the earth, I behold thrones of despotism falling, partition walls crumbling, the poor and degraded rising from their oppression, and the human race living together as one family in the enjoyment of light, liberty and peace.

3. The power of the gospel consists in the nature of its punishment. Before the promulgation of christianity mankind went upon the principle, that the severer and more terrible the punishment, the greater its beneficial tendency. This was the case, not only with religionists, but legislators, who framed their laws upon the same principle. Such is now the opinion of all who say partialism has a better effect than Universalism, because its punishment is greater. But to see the error of this, you have only to consider the brutalizing effect of cruel laws. Suppose the penalty of our laws, instead of being proportioned to the magnitude of offences, were as great as they could be made; what would be the result? How long before the most kind and tender among us, would be ripe for deeds of bloodshed and horror? There is nothing that hardens the heart like familiarity with scenes of cruelty and oppression; and that drives to desper-

ation like unjust and unholy laws. This great truth is now felt and acknowledged by our legislators. Hence justice is taking the place of cruelty, and mercy of severity. Cruelty has in many places been driven from the halls of legislation, from the walls of the prison, and from our schools of learning. Would to God it could be driven from the pulpit, from the church of Christ, and the schools of the prophets. But religionists still cling to the rod of vengeance, and seek to perpetuate the reign of terror. They still say, the greater the punishment, the better its influence. Hence we find them setting forth, by every variety of figure, their views of endless misery, thinking the more terrible they can make it, the more good it will do. But this cannot awaken a single emotion of tenderness, nor touch a single chord of love. There is nothing but evil in such terror. Besides making the heart hard and unfeeling, it veils Deity in the darkest robes of superstition, and renders him an object which we 'could not love if we would, and should not if we could.' Such punishment is neither rational nor consistent; it is food for the hypochondriac and the maniac. The moment reason forsakes her throne, the mind dwells upon infinite torture, or the unheard of treachery of friends, or calamities which are unknown in the annals of time, or some evil in its nature impossible. Now why is this, if the doctrine be the dictate of reason and goodness; if it do not deserve to be classed among the fictions of a disturbed imagination? How different is the punishment of the Gospel. Mercy and goodness stand out in the boldest letters upon the gates of divine justice. Thus it restrains, humbles and reforms the sinner.

4. The power of the Gospel consists in the doctrine of life and immortality. The riches of heaven, as set forth by the inspired writers, are

the most excellent which infinite wisdom and goodness could provide. They consist in a city whose builder and maker is God; and in an inexhaustible supply of those mercies and provisions which shall eternally satisfy the wants of a redeemed universe. Now who can realize, that through the grace of God, he is the heir of such blessings, and not have his heart filled with gratitude? Would not your heart swell with thankfulness toward the man who should make you the heir of an immense estate? But what are all the riches of earth, compared with those of heaven? Thus the Gospel makes us grateful. Well—if the heart be grateful, it will not be groveling in the ways of sin, but it will as certainly rise as everything will seek its level. Gratitude

> 'Inclines us up to God and heaven,
> By law of sweet compulsion, strong and sure,
> As gravitation the larger orb
> The less attracts, through matter's whole domain.'

Great occasions, it has been said, make great men;—and we may say, great and good doctrines make great and good men. What doctrine therefore, can so elevate and dignify as that of endless life? It exalts man above everything sinful and degrading; gives him an angel's thoughts, an angel's associations, and an angel's dignity. Destined to heaven, he turns away from everything opposed to its spirit, its glory, its songs of praise, its crowns of rejoicing. And when his enraptured soul thinks of the immensity of its prospects; the glory, honor and immortality which await it, emotions such as the spirits of the just feel, lift it up into holy communion with God. O blessed doctrine this! Mightier, far mightier than all the powers of earth; and dearer, infinitely dearer than all its treasures.

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